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ABSTRACT

The Austin Independent School District (AISD) (Texas) has been involved in year-round education for 5 years. In 1995-96, 11 elementary schools and 1 middle school had adopted the year-round plan. In all schools, the plan is a single-track plan, so that all students and all teachers have the same schedule, in which students are in school for approximately 60 days and then out for approximately 20 days of "intersession." Schools held instructional activities during two of the intersessions, and some schools offered sessions for 1 week during the breaks. An evaluation of the year-round schools included information on Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS) results. TAAS scores showed steady improvement for the year-round schools over the past 4 years. In the 1996-97 school year, economically disadvantaged African American and Hispanic students generally achieved higher TAAS scores than they did in Title I schools in general or in the district as a whole. The majority of staff members in the year-round schools were highly in favor of the calendar, as were parents and administrators. Of responding parents, 76% were in favor of the year-round calendar. Most disadvantages reported centered on the inconvenience of the nontraditional calendar, as was especially evident in the middle school. Recommendations are made for increasing the number of year-round schools at the elementary, but not the middle-school, level. Appendixes present the staff and parent surveys, list the percent of students passing the TAAS, and list demographically similar schools. (Contains 10 tables, 45 figures, and 22 references.) (SLD)

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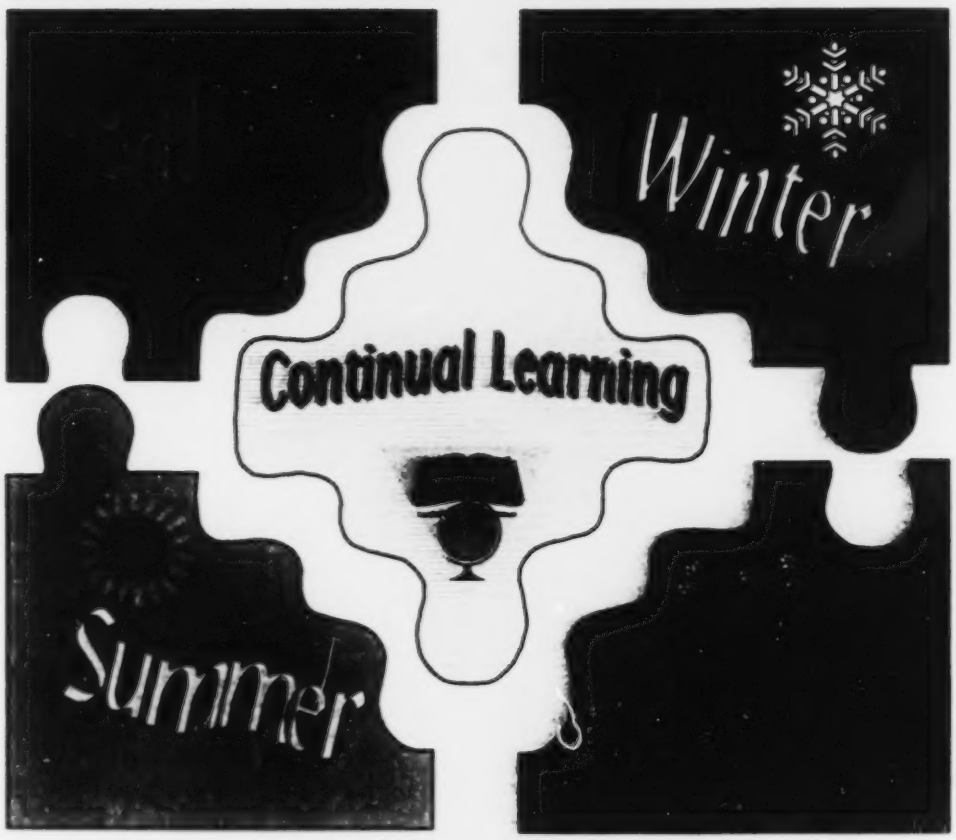

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Year-Round Schools Evaluation, 1996-97

Executive Summary

Austin Independent School District
Department of Accountability, Student Services, and Research
Office of Program Evaluation

Authors: Janice Curry, Wanda Washington and Gloria Zyskowski, Ph.D.

Overview

The Austin Independent School District (AISD) has been involved in year-round education for the past five years. In the 1992-93 school year, Sanchez Elementary became the first school in the district to implement the calendar. Six additional elementary schools implemented the year-round schedule in 1994-95. During the 1995-96 school year, four more elementary schools and one middle school adopted the year-round calendar, bringing to 12 the total number of schools in the district on this alternative schedule. All of the AISD schools follow a single-track plan, which means that all students and teachers in the school attend classes and have vacations on the same schedule. This calendar is used primarily to provide a more continuous period of instruction over the traditional nine-month schedule.

In the year-round program in AISD, the school year revolves around a modified 60/20 schedule (approximately 60 days in school and 20 days out) in contrast to the traditional nine-month calendar. The breaks between the 60-day sessions are called intersessions. Students falling behind in achievement are provided supplementary instruction during these intersessions. When funds allow, other students such as gifted/talented may participate in intersessions.

The 12 AISD schools that follow the year-round calendar are Allan, Barrington, Becker, Maplewood, Metz, Ortega, St. Elmo, Sanchez, Widen, Winn, and Wooldridge elementary schools, and Webb Middle School. A total of 7,048 students were enrolled at the year-round campuses in 1996-97.

Intersessions

Year-round schools held instructional activities during the November 1996 and March 1997 intersessions. Sanchez and Webb also held July intersessions. Most schools reported offering all-day sessions for one week during the breaks. The principals of year-round schools reported that attendance was good and enthusiasm was high during the intersessions. The duplicated count (some students attended both intersessions) for the November 1996 and the March 1997 intersessions was 3,620.

Methodology

During the 1996-97 school year, an extensive evaluation plan for the year-round schools was implemented, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data. The evaluation was designed to investigate the impact of the year-round school calendar on the ability of students to maintain and improve educational achievement. TAAS data from each of the 12 schools were examined longitudinally to determine long-term effects on the students. In addition, principals, teachers, support staff, and parents provided input on their perceptions of the year-round calendar.

Major Findings

In terms of student achievement, it was found that TAAS scores showed steady improvement for the year-round schools during the past four years. Further, for the 1996-97 school year, economically disadvantaged, African American and Hispanic students generally achieved higher average TAAS scores in year-round schools than they did in either Title I schools in general or in the district as a whole.

As a result of the evaluation, it was also determined that the majority of staffs involved with year-round elementary schools are highly in favor of the calendar. Principals, teachers, support staff, and parents expressed favorable views, citing their primary reason as being the beneficial educational effects the schedule is believed to have on students. The benefits of the year-round calendar listed by teachers, principals, and parents include the following:

- Because the year-round calendar allows short breaks throughout the year instead of one long summer break, students are able to retain more information, according to teachers and principals.
- Teachers reported that less time is required for reteaching and review at the beginning of the school year when students return after the short summer break.
- Students who need assistance to pass TAAS receive additional instruction time during the intersessions that are offered in November and March of each year.
- Teachers return from the short breaks refreshed.
- During intersession breaks, teachers can revitalize their teaching strategies and attitudes.
- Of the parents responding to the parent survey, 76% are in favor of the year-round calendar.

At the middle school, however, the staff was divided about the benefits of the year-round program for their students. Because Webb was the only AISD middle school on the year-round calendar, there were many scheduling conflicts unique to its situation.

including UIL competition, TAAS testing and extracurricular activities.

There were also disadvantages mentioned by parents, teachers, and principals. Most of the disadvantages resulted from the inconvenience of having school on a different calendar than the traditional nine-month calendar. Some of the specific disadvantages reported include the following:

- Some parents can have difficulty finding childcare during intersession breaks for students at year-round schools.
- With children on different school calendars, it can be difficult for families to plan vacations and activities.
- The scheduling of professional development activities is complicated by the year-round calendar.

Recommendations

1. Elementary schools that want to continue with the year-round calendar should be allowed and encouraged to continue with this alternative schedule.
2. Elementary schools that would like to become year-round schools and that have the support of teachers and parents should be allowed to proceed with that plan.
3. Middle schools should not follow the year-round calendar because of the scheduling conflicts caused by districtwide and statewide competitions.
4. The district should provide more support for the year-round schools by encouraging all administrative departments to be sensitive to the year-round calendar when scheduling activities and setting deadlines.
5. District policy should allow parents to transfer their children from a year-round school when the calendar presents a particular hardship for the family.
6. The Professional Development Academy should strive to schedule workshops at times when year- round teachers can attend.
7. The district should support further efforts to evaluate the long term academic benefits of the year-round calendar to students.

Funding Sources

The major additional expense for the year-round schools is the funding of the intersessions. The year-round schools use funds to cover this expense from the Optional Extended Year grant (state), Title I (federal), ExceL grant (district), Year-Round Schools Incentive grant (state), and other grants. Principals reported that they spent $545,950 for the March and November intersessions during the 1996-97 school year. Eighty-nine percent of this money, $487,043, was provided through the state-administered Optional Extended Year (OEY) grant.

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YEAR-ROUND EDUCATION
OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

In addressing the challenge of educating an increasingly diverse student population, educators are considering many innovative strategies and programs that have proven successful with disparate groups of students. One of the innovations that is gaining acceptance as an effective approach to learning is year-round education, which is described by the National Association for Year-Round Education (NAYRE) as an alternative schedule for learning that is used with a variety of time-allocation plans. The year-round calendar is organized into instructional blocks and vacation periods that are evenly distributed across 12 months.

Growth in year-round education (YRE) in the United States has been constant for the last 16 years. In the 1996-97 school year, 2,463 public and private schools in 502 school districts in 41 states followed a year-round calendar. Year-round education is gaining an increasing amount of attention from state and local policy makers who are seeking new ways of addressing either of two major problems facing educators today: 1) how to accommodate growing student populations in a climate of shrinking funds for school construction; or 2) how to improve student learning outcomes.

Texas was second only to California in the number of schools that participated in year-round education in 1996-97 (354 and 1,354 schools, respectively). The state of Texas refers to the year-round system in Section 25.084 of House Bill 1, which states that *"a school district may operate its schools year-round on either a single-track or a multi-track calendar."* The description of the year-round education calendar offered by the Texas Education Agency follows:

> *By definition, the YRE calendar is one where school is in operation during the greater part of 10 months and up to 12 calendar months of the year. In addition, as part of the calendar, regularly scheduled intersessions are established throughout the 180-day school year that districts may use for additional education activities such as remediation and/or enrichment opportunities.*

The Austin Independent School District (AISD) has been involved in the year-round education program for the past five years. Twelve AISD schools (11 elementary schools and 1 middle school) currently participate in year-round education. All AISD year-round schools use the single-track calendar.

The purpose of this evaluation is to review the academic progress of the AISD schools involved in year-round education. First, definitions of terms used in association with YRE and a review of some of the literature and studies concerning year-round education will be presented. A brief history of AISD's decision to pilot year-round education, the evaluation methodology used in this study, individual school reports, and longitudinal achievement data will follow. Summaries of the information gained from visits with the principals, teachers, and support staff at each of the 12 campuses will be presented, as well as results from a parent survey. An overall summary, including a discussion of achievement data and recommendations for year-round education in AISD, will conclude this evaluation.

REVIEW OF YEAR-ROUND EDUCATION LITERATURE

Year-round education is a concept that reorganizes the school year to provide more continuous learning by reducing the long summer vacation and distributing this vacation time more evenly throughout the year (NAYRE, 1996). In most cases, year-round schools operate on calendars that are reworkings of a traditional, nine-month calendar. Students attending a year-round school go to the same types of classes and receive the same amount of basic instruction as students on a nine-month calendar do (usually 180 days); year-round schools, however, typically supplement the number of instructional days with additional classes held during the November and March breaks.

Year-round education in the U.S. dates back to 1904 when Bluffton, Indiana schools followed a four-quarter schedule (NAYRE, 1996). States including Texas, New Jersey, North Dakota, Nebraska, Tennessee, and Pennsylvania were involved in year-round education as early as 1910 to make available 12-month access to vocational training and to provide a setting in which European immigrant children could learn English faster (Brekke, 1992). Year-round education ceased during World War II, but reappeared in 1968 in Hayward, California, which has the longest-running YRE program in the nation. Today YRE boasts an enrollment of nearly 1.8 million students in 41 states.

There are many different types of year-round education. Of the 214 U.S. school districts with a year-round calendar in 1991-92, 37% used a multi-track schedule and 30% used a single-track schedule. An additional 24% of the school districts used both single track and multi-track schedules, and 9% used a flexible all-year schedule (Ballinger, 1992).

The ***multi-track*** calendar allows a school to enroll more students than the school building was originally designed to hold. The student body is divided into several tracks. The instructional and vacation periods of each track are staggered so that at least one track (group) is on vacation at all times. This plan is often used in overcrowded schools. It can increase capacity up to fifty percent, while alleviating the need to build costly new buildings and saving on further operating expenses.

The ***single-track*** calendar provides for a 180 day (or longer) instructional year and permits a modified vacation schedule. All students and teachers in the school attend classes and have vacations on the same schedule. It is not meant to save space but is used primarily to provide a more continuous period of learning. The breaks between sessions are called ***intersessions***. Schools can use these days to offer additional instruction to students who are failing or falling behind in achievement.

The ***flexible all-year*** plan permits schools to be open for instruction approximately 240 days per year. Students must attend the minimum number of days designated by each state, but students may attend all days the school is open for additional learning opportunities. To operate this plan, teachers must be willing to individualize learning. This plan is used primarily for alternative secondary schools.

Another approach to year-round education is a ***school-within-a-school*** plan. A district can offer the year-round calendar and the nine-month calendar within the same building, with a portion of the student body attending each strand.

What Are the Possible Educational Benefits of YRE?

The primary educational benefit of YRE is that it facilitates continuous learning (Weaver, 1992). According to a study done for the New York Board of Regents (1978), most students forget some of what they learn in school while on a long summer break. This is particularly true for disadvantaged students and students for whom English is a second language. The study found that advantaged students learn an average of one year and three months worth of knowledge during the school year, and an average of one additional month's growth in the summer, for a total of one year and four months growth in learning over 12 months. By contrast, a disadvantaged student learns an average of one year and one month's growth of knowledge during the school year and then loses three or four months' worth during the summer for a net growth of seven to eight months growth in learning. With year-round education, less is forgotten over the shorter vacations, and teachers spend less time reviewing at the beginning of the school year (Alcorn, 1992).

The flexibility of the year-round calendar also offers several benefits. Schools can provide intersession programs where students participate in remedial classes or in enrichment activities, depending on the students' needs (Weaver, 1992). Weaver further states that the flexibility allowed by the year-round calendar can also help migrant students, who are at a disadvantage academically because their schedules take them in and out of school several times during the year. The timing of the intersessions may be more convenient for migrant families. In addition, Weaver notes that teachers and students are less likely to burn out and be absent on a year-round calendar (as cited in Quinlan and others).

In a related study, a statewide evaluation of year-round education by the Utah State Office of Education reported that only one percent of teachers at year-round schools in Utah scored high on all subscales of *The Maslach Burnout Inventory*, an instrument designed to indicate the presence of "burn out" (1990). Students and teachers reported that the shorter school sessions with more frequent vacation breaks throughout the year reduce stress and allow them to return to school more refreshed and with greater energy.

What Are the Possible Disadvantages of YRE?

Before implementing year-round education, school districts must consider a school's needs carefully (1989, cited in Weaver, 1992). Because year-round calendars differ significantly from the traditional school calendar, they will not succeed without the support of the community and parents who will be involved. The disadvantages as well as the benefits should be considered by those involved in the process. Some of the disadvantages cited by Weaver (1992) include the following:

- Offseason vacations can cause a problem for parents. Student summer activities can be disrupted.
- Family activities can be disrupted if siblings attend schools with different calendars.
- Finding off-season childcare can be a problem for parents. Some year-round schools have worked with the community to provide intersession activities for all students.
- Without the long summer break, teachers may not be able to continue their own education by taking university courses.

Do Year Round Schools Improve Achievement?

A growing body of evidence is being collected indicating that year-round schools help improve student achievement (Alcorn, 1992). Although data are not available to indicate with certainty how long it takes for positive outcomes to occur, it is possible to report on a number of changes in student achievement that have already been documented.

In a recent meta-analysis of 19 studies relating to student achievement in year-round educational programs (Winters, 1995), it was concluded that students participating in year-round education performed better on standardized achievement tests than did their counterparts in a traditional calendar setting. Even in studies where the findings were mixed, a significantly positive effect of year-round schooling was reported for at-risk students (1993, cited in Winters, 1995).

The results of a study conducted by Dr. Carolyn Kneese from the University of Houston also suggest that single-track YRE is particularly effective for students labeled at risk by state criteria (1994). The study compared 311 fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students enrolled in single-track YRE classes in 10 schools in a suburban school district in Texas with a sample of 311 students from traditional calendar classes in the same district. Year-round students scored approximately 5 points higher on the 1993 Norm-referenced Assessment Program of Texas (NAPT) than their traditional calendar peers.

The San Diego Unified School District released a longitudinal report (1991) comparing test scores in traditional and year-round schools from spring 1982 through spring 1990. The report revealed that a significantly higher percentage of year-round schools had maintained or improved student test scores on the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) and the California Assessment Program (CAP) compared to test results for traditional schools. The average percent increase in scores was also significantly higher in year-round schools than in traditional schools (Alcorn, 1992).

A statewide evaluation of Utah's year-round schools also reported positive outcomes. In addition to the evidence that academic achievement had improved after the implementation of the year-round calendar, the general trend was for improvement to increase the longer the year-round program had been in place (1989, cited in O'Neal, 1991).

Oxnard School District in California has had 20 years experience with YRE. A study in 1989 confirmed the districtwide belief that year-round education students, especially those who are educationally disadvantaged, experience greater learning retention over the shorter vacation breaks provided by a YRE calendar than would normally occur over a long summer vacation. An eight year look at standardized test scores for the Oxnard School District compared to the state average showed impressive gains from 1982 through 1989, closing the gap between the district's scores and those for the state.

A study done for the California State Department of Education by Quinlan et al. (cited by Weaver, 1992) revealed that California year-round school students have improved, even though they continue to score below traditional school students. In addition, when single-track and multi-track schools were considered separately, the data showed that year-round school students on a single track outperformed students on a traditional calendar, while multi-track year-round school students performed worse than their traditional-calendar counterparts.

A New Look at the Traditional Nine-Month Calendar

The original purpose of the nine-month calendar, which became the nation's standard for education in 1915, was to enhance the prevailing agricultural economy. Tradition has remained strong and American schools have resisted the powerful changes of the past century brought about by innovations in transportation, communication, and information technologies (Brekke, 1992).

A review of 39 studies by Cooper, Nye, Charlton, Lindsay, and Greathouse indicated that achievement test scores decline over summer vacation (1996). The effect of summer break was more detrimental for math than for reading, and most detrimental for math computation and spelling. There was also evidence that the summer break had approximately equal negative effects on the math skills of students from middle- and low-income families, but it had a greater negative effect on the reading skills of lower-income students. Further, it was noted that middle-income students showed a nonsignificant gain in grade-equivalent scores on reading recognition tests over the summer, while lower-income students showed a significant loss. Researchers explained the effect of income by suggesting that low socioeconomic status translated directly into fewer learning opportunities and/or less support for learning-related activities during the summer vacation.

In 1991, the U.S. Government established the National Education Commission on Time and Learning. The Commission was given the mission of reviewing the relationship between time and learning in the nation's schools. According to their 1994 report, *Prisoners of Time*, learning in America is a *"prisoner of time". "Our time-bound mentality has fooled us all into believing that schools can educate all the people, all of the time, in a school year of 180 six-hour days."* To meet ever-changing demands made by the world economy, the Commission offers several recommendations including the following:

> *We recommend that state and local boards work with schools to redesign education so that time becomes a factor supporting learning, not a boundary marking its limits.*

According to Charles Ballinger in *Rethinking the School Calendar*, the traditional nine-month calendar *"has outlived its usefulness."* He states that the least able students are not well served by the traditional school calendar because, *"A summer away from school disrupts the learning pattern required by slower students, who learn best from a continuous cycle of teaching, practice, reteaching, and practice."*

YEAR-ROUND EDUCATION IN AISD

In the fall of 1991, the Superintendent of AISD convened a task force for the purpose of discussing the possibility of implementing year-round education (YRE) in the district. The purpose was two-fold: to provide additional space for students without incurring additional building costs, and to improve achievement by providing additional instruction during the breaks. The task force consisted of teachers, administrators, parents, and community members.

The committee discussed the benefits of year-round education. Some of the advantages presented included the following:

- Continual learning could occur because students would be taking several short breaks instead of one long summer break.
- Less time would be required for review at the beginning of the school year after the short summer break.
- Teachers would have reduced stress due to short breaks throughout the year.
- Teachers could realize increased compensation possibilities from teaching during intersession.
- Parents could benefit by having the ability to vacation with their families during fall, spring, and summer breaks.
- Instruction during the intersessions would be available for at-risk students.
- Teacher and student attendance could improve as a result of the YRE calendar.

The committee also considered issues such as single versus multi-track; child-care for students during breaks; impact on traditional summer activities; budgetary costs; and teacher assignments.

The schools first identified to participate were schools with a large number of at-risk students and overcrowded schools. Eighteen schools were identified as eligible and 12 schools responded that their staff and community might be interested in implementing year-round education. The committee drafted the following mission statement:

> *"The mission of the Year-Round Education Task Force for AISD is to gather, assess and disseminate information concerning year-round education; to provide guidance concerning issues arising in the course of the study of year-round education; to make recommendations to the Board of Trustees; and to support those schools which may serve as initial pilot schools."*

During the six months that followed, the principals of schools that were interested in year-round education held meetings with parents and faculty to discuss the possibility of implementing a year-round calendar at their campuses. After much discussion and many questions, the faculty and staff of Sanchez Elementary were the only group interested in piloting the year-round calendar in 1992-93. The Sanchez community felt that the single-track schedule would best meet the needs of their students and community. It was decided that the 60/20 plan (60 days in school and 20 days off) would be the best choice for Sanchez. The advantages of the single-track YRE to the Sanchez community were stated as the following:

- The school would be open 12 months of the year and would be available to the community.
- The breakfast and lunch program would operate 12 months of the year.

- Exposure to English 12 months of the year would help the bilingual students with their English acquisition.
- YRE would *"keep us in front of the community as a place to focus on needs and interests of the children."*

The staff at Sanchez committed to a three-year pilot. Teachers and students who wanted to transfer were allowed to do so. Funding was provided through (then) Chapter 1, priority school funding (no longer available), external grants, and local funding.

Several additional schools expressed interest in YRE, but they were not ready to pilot the program in 1992-93. Six schools (Maplewood, Metz, Ortega, St. Elmo, Widen, and Winn) implemented the year-round calendar in 1994-95. The total number of schools on the year-round calendar reached 12 when Allan, Barrington, Becker, and Wooldridge elementary schools and Webb Middle School began YRE in 1995-96.

BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS

A major concern of any district considering the adoption of an innovative practice such as year-round education relates to budget issues. Especially in a district such as AISD where two separate academic calendars are in operation, there are certain additional expenses that will be incurred. It is not possible within the scope of this evaluation to report exact figures on the additional expenses to AISD associated with operating year-round schools; such information can only be obtained through a financial audit. However, as a result of discussions with central administration staff in Finance, Transportation, and Construction Management/Utilities, it is possible to arrive at some cost approximations.

By virtue of being an exception to the regular calendar, year-round schools generate additional expenses for the district. However, these extra costs do not appear to be dramatic. It has been estimated that utilities for the year-round schools cost, on average, an additional 5% to operate. Regarding transportation, it was estimated that the additional cost is approximately $9,600 to operate buses for the year-round schools (including intersessions and June schedules). Personnel costs (teachers, administrators, and classified personnel) remain the same, with the exception of intersessions, because the number of calendar days worked does not vary between regular-calendar and year-round calendar schools. It should also be noted that the above additional expenses could be applicable to other schools in the district with optional extended year programs, as well as to AISD community schools. With the numerous extensions to the school day that exist in the district, the concept of a "regular" school day is quickly becoming outmoded, so it is difficult to isolate additional expenses incurred by one variation to the calendar.

There are several funding sources that can be used to offset these additional costs to the schools and to the district. Because all of the year-round schools in AISD are also funded by Title I, there are monies from this federal grant that can be applied to the additional operating expenses. During the 1996-97 school year, 1.258% of the total Title I allocation to the district was set aside for indirect costs, representing an amount in excess of $118,000. In addition, year-round schools receive a small subsidy from TEA that can be used at the discretion of individual campuses to counterbalance additional expenses associated with the year-round calendar, although the amount received from TEA by any one campus represents a very small portion of a school's overall budget.

Most of the additional operating expenses associated with year-round schools relate to intersession activities. This is the aspect of the year-round calendar that provides additional instructional days for students, and is not an expense that falls within the normal operating budget of a school. A more complete discussion of intersession activities and the expenses associated with them can be found in the Intersessions section of this report.

EVALUATION DESIGN

During the 1996-97 school year, an evaluation plan for the year-round schools was implemented, incorporating both qualitative and quantitative data. The evaluation was designed to investigate the impact of year-round schools on the ability of students to maintain and improve educational achievement. In addition, the evaluation addressed the effect of the program on principals, teachers, parents, and support staff. The year-round schools investigated various components of the program, including the following:

- student achievement (including TLI gains across grades);
- staff development;
- program initiatives;
- budget concerns;
- parental involvement; and
- district support.

With the exception of the achievement data, the above information was gathered through the examination of existing documents, such as the Campus Improvement Plans and Title I budget allocations by campus. Additional information was gathered through interviews with principals, teachers, and support staff; and surveys of teachers, parents, and district personnel.

Qualitative Data

Title I evaluation staff designed and administered a series of interviews and surveys for the evaluation of the 12 year-round schools. Both multiple-choice and open-ended response items were used. Copies of the instruments are included in Appendix A.

Evaluation staff interviewed the principal at each school. Each principal also was asked to select one teacher from each grade level (pre-K through grade 8, as appropriate) to be responsible for completing teacher questionnaires. It was recommended that the teachers selected to complete the questionnaires include both intersession and non-intersession participants. In addition, the principals were asked to select at least three teachers and several members of their school's support staff (such as counselors, custodians, and cafeteria workers) to be interviewed by the evaluation staff. In this way, it was hoped that the opinions of all groups of individuals involved with the operation of the year-round schools could be included in the evaluation effort. Principal and teacher responses are included in the individual school reports, as well as in summary sections of this document. The results of the support staff interviews are presented only in a summary section, primarily because of the low number of respondents from each school and because of the consistency of the responses across all schools.

Because parental support is vital to the successful adoption of the year-round calendar, the opinions of parents were also sought for this evaluation. A simple random sample of 360 parents (30 from each of the 12 year-round schools) was drawn. The parents were mailed a survey containing questions in both English and Spanish, and were asked to return the completed survey in the stamped, preaddressed envelope provided. However, of the 360 surveys mailed, 13 were returned as undeliverable and nine were returned too late to be included in the analysis. Of the remaining surveys, 81 were completed and returned on time and, thus, were included in the

evaluation. Because of the low response rate of 23%, the results of the parental surveys are presented only in aggregate, and should be interpreted with caution.

Finally, central administration staff were given the opportunity to provide their opinions of the year-round calendar. Area superintendents and instructional coordinators were asked to complete surveys, and seven surveys were returned. The results of these surveys are presented in a summary section on district staff responses to year-round schools.

Quantitative Data

In order to address the impact of year-round schools on student achievement, several analyses were undertaken. TAAS passing rates, along with average Texas Learning Index (TLI) scores, were examined for each of the twelve year-round schools. The following comparisons were made:

- each year-round school vs. the district;
- year-round schools as a group vs. the district;
- year-round schools vs. demographically similar schools in Texas; and
- students served during intersession vs. students not served during intersession.

In addition to the above comparisons, a longitudinal analysis of achievement data was conducted, in order to determine if there has been a cumulative effect of the year-round calendar on student achievement. Each year-round school was examined over time, using average TLI scores on TAAS. The analyses included scores for all non-exempt students tested over the past four years, which is the number of years that TLI scores have been available. Because the 12 year-round schools adopted the calendar at different times, each school was treated separately, and the results of the longitudinal analyses are presented in the individual school reports. When interpreting the results of the longitudinal studies, it is necessary to keep in mind that the 12 schools involved have followed the year-round calendar for differing amounts of time and, in many cases, the calendar has been in place for a period that is too short for an innovation to show its true effect.

An additional study is presented that examines the effects of the year-round calendar on the academic achievement of pre-K students. Scores on the *Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised* (PPVT) and the *Test de Vocabulario en Imagines Peabody* (TVIP) are presented for students in year-round schools, regular-calendar schools, and all schools with pre-K.

Attendance data were also examined to see the effect, if any, of the year-round calendar on this variable. In addition, demographic information is provided for each school, using data from the October 1996 PEIMS submission. Consequently, the enrollment figures presented in the individual school reports may differ slightly from final enrollment figures compiled by the campuses.

WEBB MIDDLE SCHOOL DECISION

Prior to the completion of this evaluation report, an administrative decision was made to release Webb Middle School from the year-round calendar. Parents and staff at Webb made the request to their area superintendent, citing scheduling conflicts and problems with student transitions as primary reasons for desiring a return to the nine-month calendar. In addition, the original administrative team responsible for Webb's involvement in the year-round movement was no longer at the campus, and this change in leadership also had an effect on the staff's desire to continue with the calendar. When reading the sections of this report that pertain to Webb Middle School (all written prior to this administrative decision), it will become apparent that the problems encountered by this particular campus were unique. The difficulties for year-round schools presented by the UIL calendar and by various districtwide competitions, along with the particular hardships encountered by families of students enrolled at Webb, contributed to the district's decision to allow Webb to return to the traditional calendar.

INDIVIDUAL SCHOOL REPORTS

ALLAN ELEMENTARY

Allan Elementary School, built in 1957 in east Austin, has been a year-round school since 1995. Of the 517 students enrolled at Allan during the 1996-97 school year, 82% were Hispanic, 16% were African American, and 2% were Anglo/Other. In addition, 94% of the enrolled students were from low-income families.

Intersessions

During the November and March intersessions, Allan Elementary focused on improving reading, writing, and mathematics skills through literacy activities. Teachers received professional development in ways to incorporate literacy in all academic areas. Also, teachers received technology training through a partnership with Southwest Texas State University to help students excel in reading fluency and comprehension. To promote parent/family awareness of the program, parents of students participating in the intersessions were invited to a working luncheon to make reading and mathematics materials to use with their children at home.

A total of 294 pre-K through grade 5 students attended the 1996-97 intersessions at Allan. Ninety-five students attended the November 1996 intersession, and 199 students attended the March 1997 intersession.

Principal Interview

The principal of Allan, David Segura, reported that the year-round school calendar was received very positively. More than 80% of the staff, parents, and community supported the year-round calendar when surveyed prior to the implementation in 1995-96.

There are many advantages to the year-round calendar, according to Mr. Segura. There is more time for teachers to work with students one-on-one during the intersessions. As a result of the restructuring that has taken place since the implementation of the year-round calendar, TAAS scores have risen.

The year-round calendar is appealing to agencies, universities, and other institutions that do student research during non-traditional calendar months, according to the principal. This type of research is beneficial to the school because it is free, and sometimes grants are given for the research.

The principal also reported that the year-round calendar seems to have a positive effect on students' transition to middle school. Teachers and staff at Allan use the time in June to do activities with O Henry Middle School that prepare students for the upcoming transition.

Mr. Segura indicated that the year-round calendar has some drawbacks as well. Teachers have difficulty pursuing higher education during the summer months. Also, teachers cannot always attend professional development offered in June. Parents can be inconvenienced by scheduling around a non-traditional school calendar. Students may have difficulty if they transfer to a regular-calendar school during the year.

Teacher Responses

Teachers reported making a variety of adaptations to the curriculum in response to the year-round calendar. First, the curriculum has been expanded to include summer-specific topics,

such as Independence Day and the Summer Olympics. In addition, teachers described enhancing the school curriculum with innovative and interesting intersession activities, such as the production of a school newspaper and additional field trips. Teachers mentioned that they assign packets of work to complete and books to read during the intersessions. Also, teachers reported that intersessions benefit students who need additional instruction on TAAS objectives, as well as gifted and talented students who might participate in enrichment activities. Intersessions provide opportunities to give more individual attention to students.

Teachers listed many ways the year-round calendar benefits both themselves and their students. Generally, teachers are less stressed at the end of a year-round school year because the pace is consistent, and there is more time for planning throughout the year. Teachers reported that during the intersessions they can *"hone their teaching strategies, work on holiday projects, and revitalize their attitudes."* Also, during the intersessions, teachers can take the opportunity to visit other schools and learn new instructional techniques. Overall, the teachers reported that, with the year-round calendar, they are able to provide higher quality instruction because the year-round calendar allows them to *"assess, evaluate, and modify more often and more quickly."* Teachers also reported feeling that they had better communication with parents, and that their students attended intersession classes because they wanted to learn.

The year-round calendar is extremely beneficial for students, according to teachers. Students exhibit an increased retention of material because of the shorter breaks. When students return to school, therefore, reteaching is minimized. For students whose native language is not English, the year-round school is helpful because they hear English spoken over a longer portion of the year. Teachers also reported that students typically return from intersessions rested and relaxed.

Factors Affecting Implementation

District administrative support is a factor that affects the implementation of the year-round calendar. The principal of Allan stated that support for year-round education is provided by Title I staff. Mr. Segura added that additional support from other central administration staff would be helpful.

Other factors that affect the implementation of year-round schools include the following: 1) additional funds must be secured for the intersession programs; 2) special arrangements must be made for facility maintenance; and 3) clerical staff are on a 9-month schedule. Mr. Segura suggested that, because of additional paperwork generated by the schools being open more days during the year, clerical staff should be 12 months employees.

Longitudinal Achievement

It is of particular interest to examine the performance of the year-round schools over time to determine any long-term effects of the year-round calendar on student achievement. Each campus was examined separately because the 12 schools have followed the year-round calendar for differing lengths of time.

Allan has been a year-round school since 1995-96. Figures 1 and 2 present the average TLI by disaggregated group on reading and mathematics, respectively, for the past four years. For the two years prior to becoming a year-round school, Allan students showed a slight increase in

their average TLI in both reading and mathematics. However, for the immediate past two years, during which time Allan followed the year-round calendar, the average TLI scores increased at a greater rate.

Figure 1: Allan Elementary TAAS Reading TLI by Disaggregated Group, 1994 through 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)

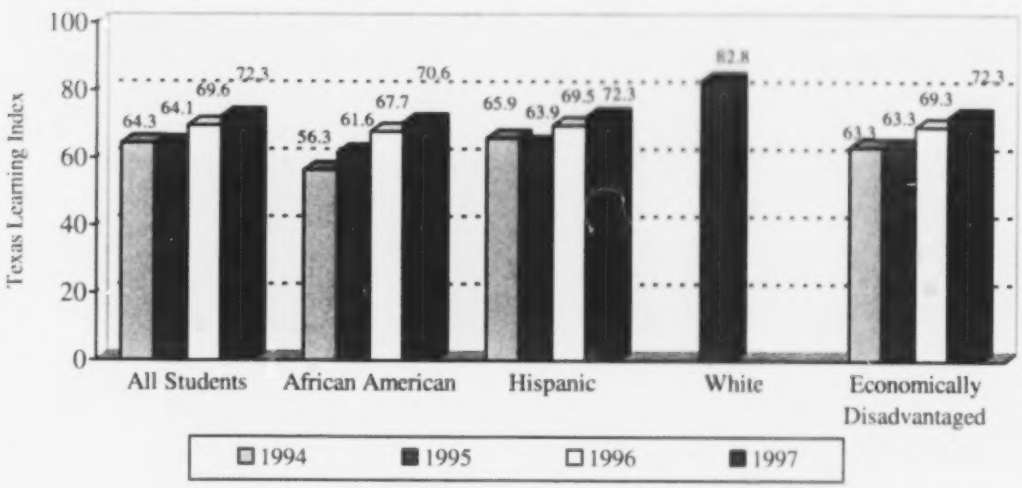
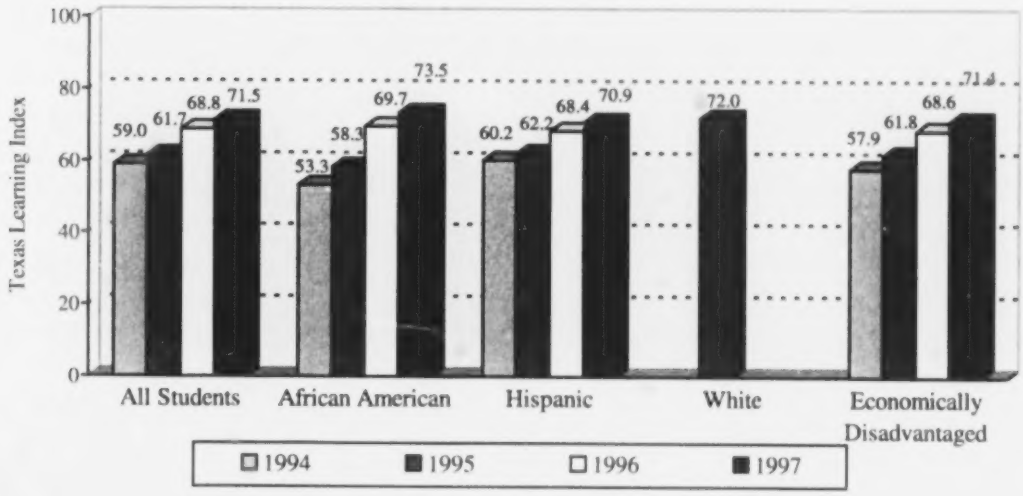


Figure 2: Allan Elementary TAAS Mathematics TLI by Disaggregated Group, 1994 through 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)



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BARRINGTON ELEMENTARY

Barrington Elementary, located in north Austin, was built in 1969. The 1996-97 Barrington enrollment of 802 students was quite diverse, composed of 49% Hispanic, 27% African American, 20% Anglo/Other, 3% Asian, and 1% Native American students. Of these students, 78% were from low-income families.

Intersessions

Barrington has been a year-round school for two years. During the 1996-97 intersessions, Barrington teachers designed interdisciplinary, project-driven activities that addressed important learning goals for each grade level. Professional development activities were provided to the teachers to assist them in planning and writing interdisciplinary curricula, and in problem-solving strategies in reading and mathematics. The parent/family awareness component of the year-round program was addressed through parent meetings that created an awareness of the program and that evaluated the intersession content and results.

Students were selected to participate in intersessions if they needed progress toward TAAS mastery by objective, needed additional help according to their nine-week grades, or had received a recommendation from a teacher. A total of 322 students attended the 1996-97 intersessions at Barrington that included one week of full-day, hands-on activities (135 students in November and 187 students in March).

Principal Interview

The principal of Barrington, Ms. Joan Valdespino-Vasbinder, believes that the students attending a year-round campus benefit academically in several ways. The smaller increments of time off instead of a long summer help promote student learning. The faculty of Barrington found that before the implementation of the year-round calendar, teachers spent six to eight weeks reteaching at the beginning of the school year. With the year-round calendar, students were able to maintain and advance during the first nine weeks of school by three or four months. The principal says that *"kids need ongoing instruction. Special needs students need routine and consistency."*

Ms. Valdespino-Vasbinder indicated that there are some inconveniences that a year-round school community may experience. The year-round calendar may create difficulties with professional development. Because the year-round calendar does require additional funding, schools must write grants and use other funding sources to supplement their budgets.

All of the children in one family may not be on the same schedule, which may cause scheduling or childcare difficulties for parents. However, parents are permitted to transfer their children to another school if the schedule will not work for their family. Barrington offers Extend-a-Care throughout the intersessions and works with area childcare providers to make childcare available. In a recent survey conducted by Barrington, 76% of the parents responded that they are in favor of the year-round calendar.

Teacher Reponses

Year-round education benefits students, according to the teachers at Barrington. It is also easier to maintain closer contact with parents throughout the school year to promote learning.

Teachers had many positive statements to make about the year-round calendar, including the following:

- *Intersession time has allowed our school to focus on student needs, especially with students with special/extra needs.*
- *The year-round schedule has given teachers and students needed breaks.*
- *Intersessions offer smaller classes and more individualized instruction.*
- *We have been able to enrich, intervene, and supplement the standard curriculum with additional activities that are hands-on and real-life situations and relate them directly to TAAS objectives for our at-risk students.*
- *The year-round calendar has provided a new beginning after each intersession break. Teachers and students are eager to return after intersessions and go back to work.*
- *The year-round calendar implementation has afforded us an opportunity to provide more intervention activities for our at-risk students.*

Factors Affecting Implementation

Ms. Valdespino-Vasbinder enthusiastically supports the year-round calendar. She offered some specific advice to principals who are considering implementing the year-round calendar, including the following:

- Be organized.
- Plan carefully.
- Share with the community.
- Base the criteria for intersession participation on the needs of students.
- Communicate with parents so that they understand criteria for intersession participation.
- Monitor your budget so that you are meeting the needs of as many children as possible.

Longitudinal Achievement

Barrington has been a year-round school since 1995-96. Figures 3 and 4 present the average TLI by disaggregated group on reading and mathematics, respectively, for the past four years. The average TLI scores in reading have remained fairly consistent during the past four years, with the scores showing overall increases between 1994 and 1997 (79.2 to 80.7 for all students, for example). The pattern in TLI scores for mathematics is slightly different, showing steady increases over the four year period. This pattern is consistent across the disaggregated groups. In addition, the magnitude of the increases is slightly larger for mathematics (72.0 to 76.9 for all students and 70.6 to 76.2 for economically disadvantaged, for example).

Figure 3: Barrington Elementary TAAS Reading TLI by Disaggregated Group, 1994 through 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)

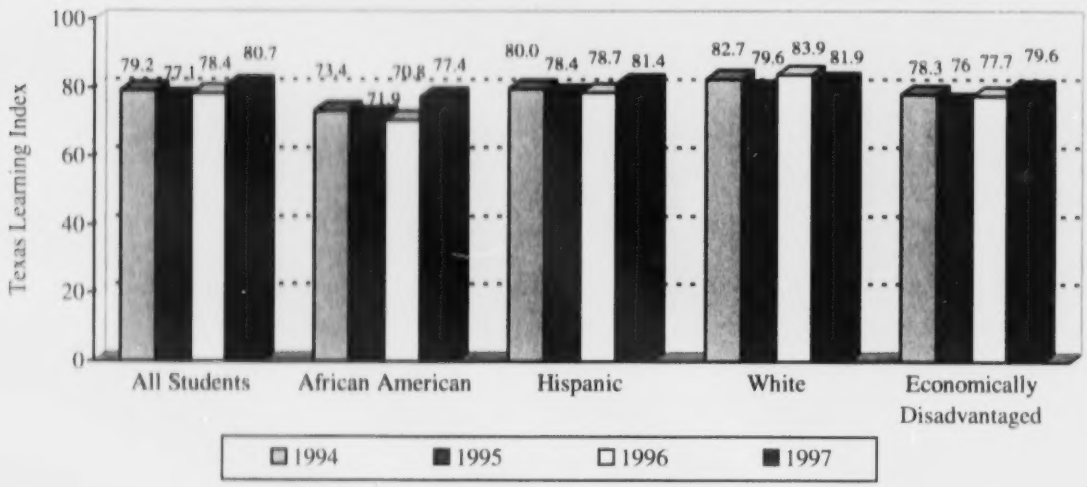
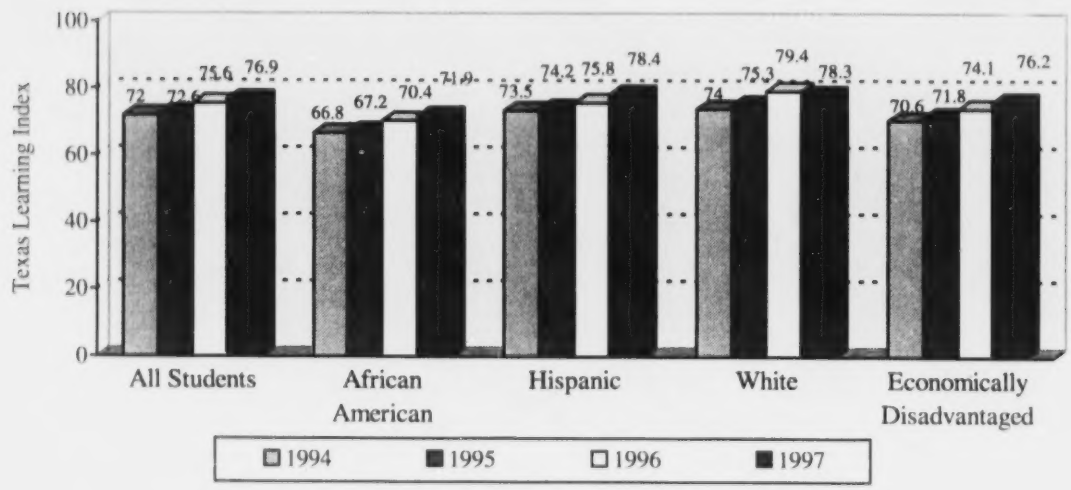


Figure 4: Barrington Elementary TAAS Mathematics TLI by Disaggregated Group, 1994 through 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)



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BECKER ELEMENTARY

Becker Elementary School was established and built in 1936 in south Austin. The 1996-97 student enrollment consisted of 358 students. Of these 76% were Hispanic, 15% were African American, and 9% were Anglo/Other. Further, 90% of these students were from low-income families.

Intersessions

Becker became a year-round campus in the 1995-96 school year, and is in the second year of the program's implementation. During the 1996-97 November and March interessions, Becker focused on instruction in reading and mathematics. Teachers received training from AISD math coordinators in techniques to enhance mathematics instruction. In addition, new staff were trained in reading strategies specific to the program for reading instruction used at Becker. The parent/family awareness component of the program was implemented through "family math nights." Also, parents were invited to participate in activity fairs held at the end of each intersession.

The Becker intersession is a full-day program for one week during each break. Students are selected for participation based on TAAS performance and teacher recommendation. In 1996-97, a total of 223 students attended the intersession programs. Eighty-six students participated in the November intersession and 137 students participated in the March intersession. Bilingual pre-K and kindergarten students receive instruction during the intersessions through bilingual education funds.

Principal Interview

The principal of Becker, Judy Taylor, indicated that the year-round calendar has many benefits for the Becker school community. She feels that the summer can be too long for students who have nothing constructive to do, such as many of the low-income children of the neighborhood. Students and parents benefit from having the school open during 10 months of the school year. Students seem to retain what they have learned with shorter breaks throughout the year instead of one long summer break.

Ms. Taylor indicated that parents, teachers, and students can benefit from opportunities to travel (which can be energizing and educational) during several seasons of the year. Teachers seem to have a higher energy level and are more relaxed when they come back from intersession, according to Ms. Taylor. An additional benefit for teachers who have children in other schools is the opportunity to visit and volunteer in their own children's schools.

Teachers' reluctance to take professional development in July is one of the possible disadvantages of year-round education cited by Ms. Taylor. However, this problem is remedied by having a training specialist come to campus to offer professional development when teachers can attend. Also, substitutes can be hired to allow teachers to attend workshops at the Professional Development Academy (PDA) when the year-round schools are in session.

A creative approach to the differences in school calendars has been taken at Becker. Secondary students who are not in school in June can volunteer to help at the school. The students fill out applications, and teachers can choose student aides for their classrooms. Ms. Taylor says

that not only does this help teachers, but it can also benefit parents who want their older children to have constructive summer activities.

Overall, parents and teachers are supportive of the year-round calendar, according to Ms. Taylor. There are more teachers who want to teach intersession than the number of positions available.

Teacher Responses

The teachers at Becker believe that one of the benefits of the year-round calendar is higher retention of information learned which leads to higher test (TAAS) scores. They also believe that there is less teacher "burnout" associated with the year-round calendar which results in fewer teacher absences.

There are many benefits of intersessions, according to the teachers at Becker. The year-round calendar allows schools to use the time during the breaks to boost achievement of students in need of additional instruction. Other comments made by teachers about the effects of year-round schools include the following:

- *Intersession classes provide concentrated learning in a fun manner.*
- *School facilities can be used more days of the year.*
- *It is difficult to achieve the learning that society wants schools to achieve in 36 weeks.*
- *Children want to come to intersessions.*
- *Most of the families of children in greatest need are very supportive.*
- *The self-esteem of children who attend intersession can improve with the extra attention and instruction received during intersession classes.*
- *Teachers send home packets during the intersessions for review with parents.*
- *Teachers get excited with beginnings and endings.*

Factors Affecting Implementation

The main complication with the implementation of the year-round calendar, according to Ms. Taylor, is that central administration sometimes *"forgets that year-round schools are on a different schedule."* Deadlines are usually set according to the traditional calendar.

Ms. Taylor says that before becoming a year-round school, some of the staff members of the school should visit other year-round campuses and interview the staff and principals. It is also helpful to invite individuals from year-round campuses to come speak with the faculty and community about the pros and cons of becoming a year-round school.

Longitudinal Achievement

Becker has been a year-round school since 1995-96. Figures 5 and 6 present the average TLI by disaggregated group on reading and mathematics, respectively, for the past four years. These data represent scores for two years prior to the adoption of the calendar as well as the two years that Becker has followed the alternative schedule. In general, average TLI scores in both reading and mathematics remained fairly constant between 1994-1996, then showed an increase across the disaggregated groups over the past year. One exception to this pattern is performance of

African American students in mathematics, whose scores show a decline between 1994 and 1997 (69.6 to 66.9).

Figure 5: Becker Elementary TAAS Reading TLI by Disaggregated Group, 1994 through 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)

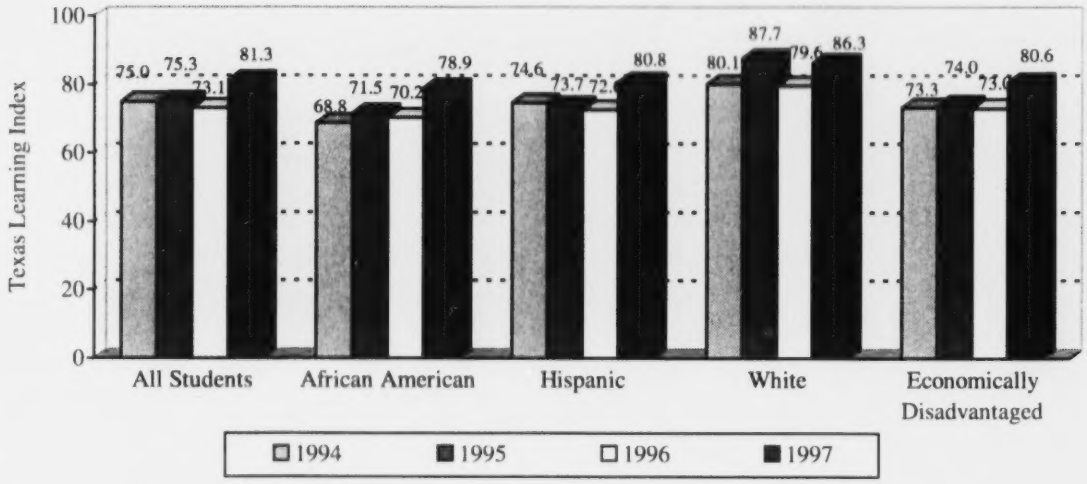
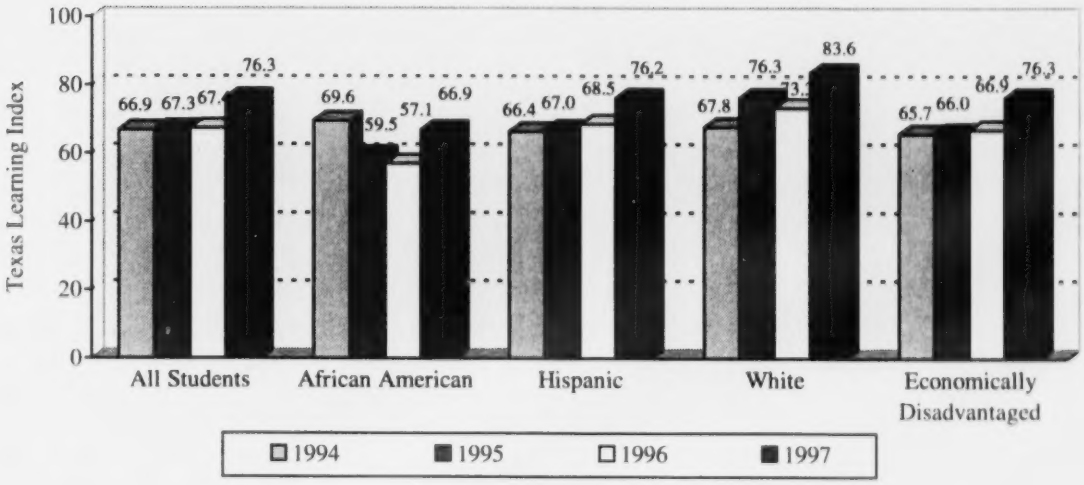


Figure 6: Becker Elementary TAAS Mathematics TLI by Disaggregated Group, 1994 through 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)



MAPLEWOOD ELEMENTARY

Maplewood Elementary, built in 1951 in east Austin, had a 1996-97 enrollment of 387 students. This student population was 52% African American, 24% Hispanic, 23% Anglo/Other, and 1% Asian. Of these Maplewood students, 72% were from low-income families.

Intersessions

Maplewood has completed its third year of implementation of the year-round program. For the 1996-97 intersessions, classes used aligned thematic units written by Maplewood staff. The units provided reinforcement of specific TAAS objectives and essential elements. The teachers who wrote and taught these thematic units received professional staff development in a number of related areas, including accelerated instruction, theme building, and curriculum alignment. Parents of identified students were expected to attend a "family awareness" workshop during each intersession, at which the parents were led through activities to use at home with their children to reinforce learning.

During the 1996-97 school year, 204 students attended the November and March intersessions. The attendance at the intersessions was 94 students in November and 110 students in March.

Principal Interview

Mr. Rene LeBlanc was in his first year as principal at Maplewood this year. While he had no quantitative evidence of the benefits of the year-round calendar at the time of the interview, he believes that the students retain more knowledge over the short summer break, and there is less start-up time at the beginning of the school year.

Mr. LeBlanc does see some disadvantages of the year-round calendar as implemented by AISD. District cohesiveness is an issue as only 12 of the AISD schools are currently following the year-round calendar. He says that, on several occasions, central administration overlooked the year-round calendar when setting deadlines. Deadlines for grant applications, textbook ordering, and the Campus Improvement Plan (CIP) are the same across the district with no accommodation for the year-round calendar.

There are many special arrangements that are necessary for operation of a year-round school. Scheduling of building maintenance and major cleaning is more difficult since some of the rooms are used during the intersessions, according to the principal. In addition, intersession planning and budgeting takes a great deal of time. However, in spite of all the extra work, everyone involved with intersessions is very positive about them, says Mr. LeBlanc. The program offered during intersession appeals to students, teachers, parents, and Mr. LeBlanc.

Teacher Responses

Teachers at Maplewood believe that the implementation of the year-round calendar has made their school closer with a sense of family and cooperation. Intersessions allow teachers to work with different students and co-workers, allowing everyone involved to feel closer as a school community.

Teachers use enriched curriculum during intersessions with the TAAS targets as the main focus. Smaller classes and individual attention will help the students succeed, teachers say. Also, more individualized instruction is used to tap into many different learning styles. To make intersessions a success, teachers planned educational and enjoyable activities for students, applied for grants to fund activities and intersessions, and scheduled childcare for parents who needed it. Other comments about the year-round calendar by teachers include the following:

- *Students are not away from the learning environment for extended periods of time.*
- *Students who attend intersession have an opportunity to reinforce skills in which they are weak.*
- *Children have a place to go instead of staying home alone.*
- *Year-round breaks facilitate professional development and curriculum planning.*
- *Students are enthusiastic about attending intersession.*
- *Our summer break is like a long weekend; students are ready to work and do not need the reteaching that usually occurs at the beginning of school.*
- *The year-round calendar provides opportunities to visit with relatives at times other than summer.*
- *Intersession provides students with very positive learning experiences and language development.*

Factors Affecting Implementation

The principal of Maplewood says that factors affecting implementation of the year-round calendar include central administration, teachers, parents, and community members. All of these groups have an effect on year-round schools.

When asked what advice he would have for other schools that were considering following the year-round calendar, the principal says to "*be prepared for all of the budget issues, question many of the deadlines set for traditional schools, and be willing to WORK*!" He adds that principals should carefully consider how many teachers they will need for intersessions. Principals also need to communicate fully and often with parents. Mr. LeBlanc says that principals "*need to pay close attention to district deadlines, and be prepared to work during breaks, because that is when many deadlines occur. It would be nice if everyone in the district operated on the same schedule--the year-round schedule!*"

Longitudinal Achievement

Maplewood is in its third year of implementation of the year-round calendar. Figures 7 and 8 present the average TLI by disaggregated group on reading and mathematics, respectively, for the past four years. In the year after adopting the year-round calendar (1994-95), students at Maplewood showed a slight increase in their average TLI in both reading and mathematics for all students and across all disaggregated groups. Average TLI scores appear to have remained fairly consistent, in general, since that initial increase.

Figure 7: Maplewood Elementary TAAS Reading TLI by Disaggregated Group, 1994 through 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)

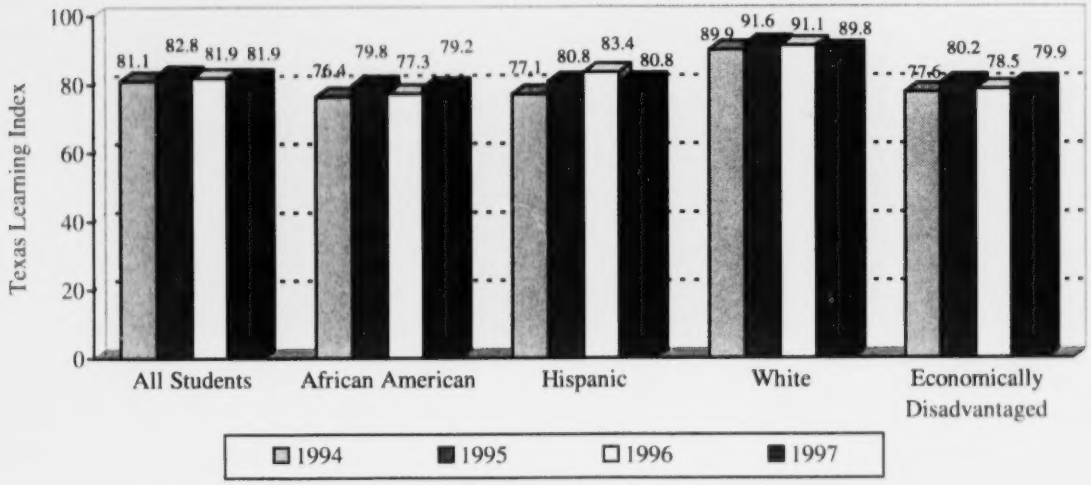
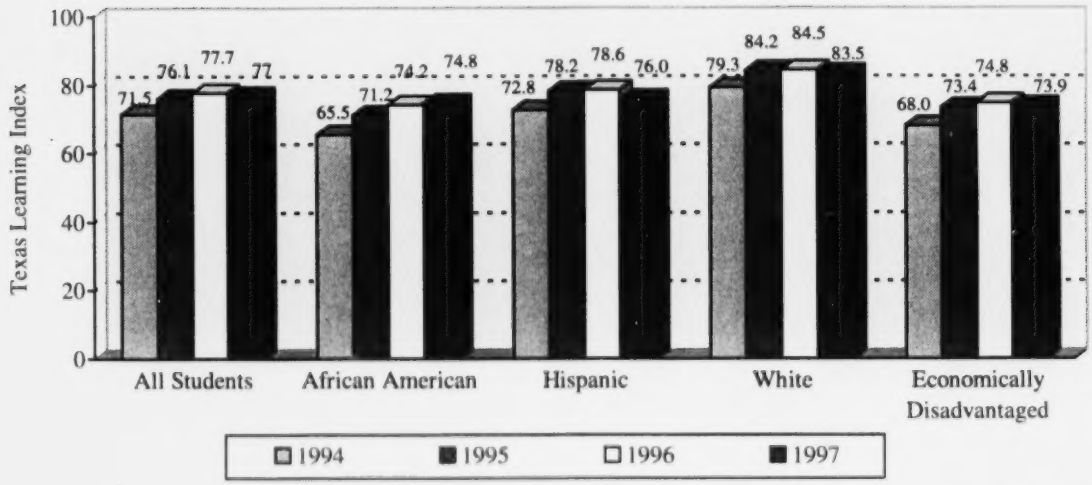


Figure 8: Maplewood Elementary TAAS Mathematics TLI by Disaggregated Group, 1994 through 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)



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METZ ELEMENTARY

Metz Elementary, located in east Austin, is one of the newest campuses in AISD; the current facility was built in 1992. In 1996-97, the enrollment at Metz consisted of 504 students, 95% of whom were Hispanic, 3% African American, 1% Anglo/Other, and 1% Native American. Of these students, 91% were from low-income families. Metz is a pre-K through grade 6 campus using multi-age grouping.

Intersessions

Metz has been part of the year-round program since 1994. During the 1996-97 intersessions, the focus at Metz was on thematic, hands-on, real world applications. In addition, a portion of each day was spent on TAAS strategies. Teachers in the program received professional staff development on thematic, hands-on units of study and on an integrated language arts plan. The parent/family awareness component of the year-round program was addressed using a number of approaches, including parent orientation meetings and intersession culmination activities.

Students who attended the 1996-97 intersessions at Metz numbered 255. One hundred twenty-eight students participated in the November intersession, and 127 students participated in the March 1997 intersession.

Principal Interview

The principal of Metz, Ms. Celia Martinez, believes that the year-round calendar benefits students, parents, and teachers. Students benefit from smaller classes and individualized instruction during the intersessions. According to the principal, the breaks seem to come at good times during the year to avoid a buildup of behavior problems.

Teachers have the opportunity to work during intersessions, travel, and take needed time off, says Ms. Martinez. Teachers also have a chance to be "parents" themselves and attend their child's activities during the breaks.

The parents at Metz appreciate having a place for their children in the summer, the principal says. The cost of childcare can be spread out over the year instead of concentrated in the summer months. Metz offers full-day and half-day childcare during the intersessions.

Ms. Martinez reported that the major disadvantage of the year-round program at Metz is that they are unable to accommodate the number of students who want to attend the intersessions due to a lack of funds and space. Scheduling staff development and pursuing an advanced degree are complicated by the year-round calendar, she says. However, most of the staff development problems have been offset by offering to provide substitute teachers for teachers who attend staff development during the school year. In addition, principals need to be flexible with teachers who want to work on an advanced degree, according to Ms. Martinez.

Student enrollment has increased during the time that Metz has been on the year-round calendar. Ms. Martinez reported that Metz had to adopt an "end enrollment period," which is the second week of May, to discourage parents from transferring their children into Metz after the regular-calendar schools close.

Teacher Responses

Metz teachers are very open to innovative teaching strategies and programs. In addition to being a year-round school, Metz is also a multi-age campus with a dual language program. Teachers reported that curriculum changes required at their campus resulted from the multi-age grouping more than the year-round calendar.

The music teacher reported that, because the Music Memory Contest is in April, two months of preparation time are lost. In spite of this inconvenience, the Metz Music Memory team placed second in the districtwide competition in 1996-97.

With the year-round calendar, teachers have time to reflect and plan between sessions, according to one teacher. Also, teachers and students do not "burn out."

Teachers also believe that children retain information longer and seem to benefit from the implementation of the year-round calendar. Teachers feel that intersessions are implemented at a reasonable time of the year and that the break from school is beneficial. One teacher said, *"I find that the additional four-to-six weeks of teacher/student instructional contact is supported by the students' physical, social, and emotional development and growth."*

Factors Affecting Implementation

Ms. Martinez believes that the support from central administration is satisfactory. However, sensitivity to the year-round calendar in planning events and deadlines would be helpful to all of the year-round schools.

Ms. Martinez says that she personally loves the year-round calendar. She made the following recommendations for principals who might be considering implementing the year-round calendar:

- *You must want to do it for the kids.*
- *Learn to be flexible in your planning.*
- *Keep on top of small details (e.g., communicating to parents about when the school will be closed for intersession).*
- *Intersession is not a quick fix--be patient.*
- *Get initial support from the faculty and staff before going to parents and community.*
- *Secure outside financial aid.*

Longitudinal Achievement

Metz is in its third year of implementation of the year-round calendar. Figures 9 and 10 present the average TLI by disaggregated group in reading and mathematics, respectively, for the past four years. In the year after adopting the year-round calendar (1994-95), students at Metz showed a slight increase in their average TLI in reading for all students and across all disaggregated groups. These scores declined in 1995-96 but showed an increase across all groups during the past school year. Average TLI scores in mathematics also increased in the first year after the year-round calendar was adopted, and these gains appear to have remained fairly consistent since that initial increase.

Figure 9: Metz Elementary TAAS Reading TLI by Disaggregated Group, 1994 through 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)

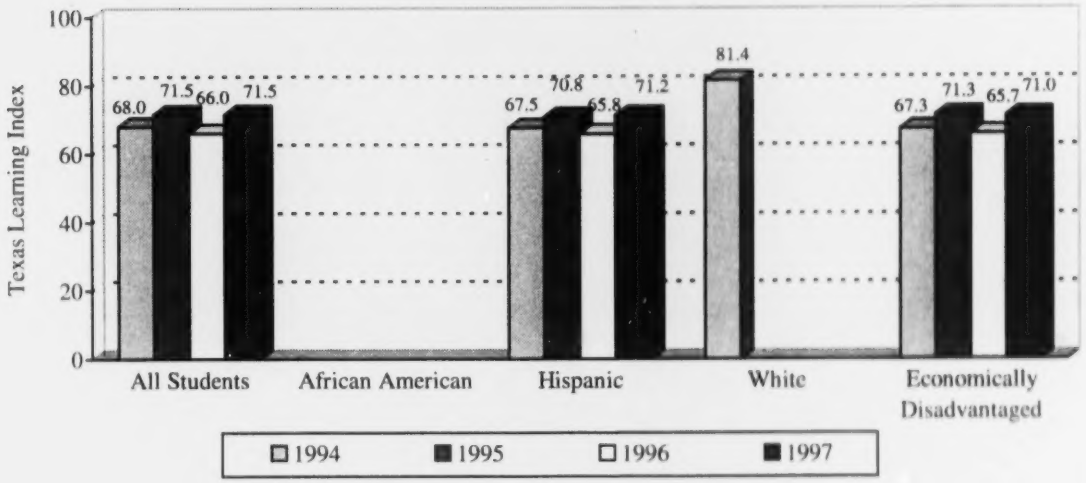
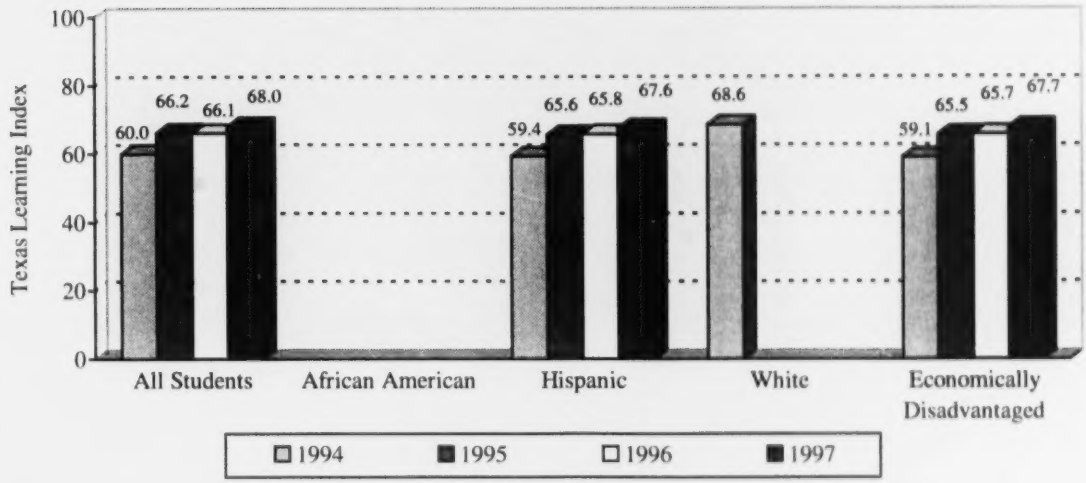


Figure 10: Metz Elementary TAAS Mathematics TLI by Disaggregated Group, 1994 through 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)



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ORTEGA ELEMENTARY

Ortega Elementary was built in 1956 in east Austin. During the 1996-97 school year, 365 students attended Ortega. Of these students, 75% were Hispanic, 22% African American, 2% Anglo/Other, and 1% Asian. In addition, 88% of these students were from low-income families. Ortega enrolls students in prekindgarten through grade 6.

Intersessions

Ortega is in its third year of implementation of the year-round program. During the 1996-97 intersessions, Ortega's instructional program focused on mathematics and language arts. Accelerated, thematic instruction was used to make the learning relevant and project-based. Professional staff development was provided on various topics, including project-based curriculum design and instructional strategies. The parent/family awareness component of the year-round program was addressed by funding a parent training specialist to ensure optimal student attendance during intersessions, to conduct home visits, and to provide parent training in the areas of mathematics and language arts.

A total of 254 pre-K through grade 6 students attended the 1996-97 intersessions at Ortega. One hundred thirty-five students attended the November intersession, and 119 students attended in March intersession.

Helping Teacher Interview

Ms. Aurora Garcia, the helping teacher at Ortega, believes that the year-round calendar is developmentally appropriate for young learners. She says that in the month of June, when the traditional calendar schools are out, students can *"capitalize on an observed developmental hurdle they seem to cross in May."* Ms. Garcia says that, under the nine-month school calendar, *schooling stops just as this developmental readiness is being reached."*

The helping teacher believes that year-round schools should be *"a forethought, not an afterthought."* When the district makes plans and sets deadlines, district staff could use the same sensitivity in scheduling as they use to communicate to parents of bilingual students. This "bilingual" approach could be used to set different deadlines for 9-month and 12-month schools. Just as Title I and Optional Extended Year grants did in 1996-97.

Disadvantages of the year-round calendar include the scheduling of activities by parents and teachers, Ms. Garcia says. While some teachers have requested transfers out of Ortega because they wanted to be on the same schedule as their children, other teachers have used the time off to visit their own children's schools.

According to the helping teacher, there is some difficulty associated with the time that grade 6 students' choice sheets for middle school are due. Choice sheets have to be sent to the middle schools in April, which does not give students long enough to decide on appropriate courses.

Teacher Responses

The teachers at Ortega feel that they can teach topics more in-depth and cover more material with the year-round calendar than with the regular calendar. Teachers noted that they

have the opportunity to observe teachers in regular-calendar schools to observe other teaching strategies and ideas.

Most of the teachers interviewed believed the breaks are good for students and teachers, although several teachers commented that it would be better to be in school through November and break during December. The current year-round calendar has students out of school three weeks in November and two weeks in December. One teacher felt that this calendar makes too many starting and stopping points in the school year.

Other teacher comments about the year-round calendar include the following:

- *Intersessions allow for further bonding of student and staff- "School is Fun" realization-while being strongly tied to the needs of specific grade levels.*
- *I assign reading assignments during these short intersessions, and long-term assignments can be started.*
- *Most of the students in my class who could benefit the most from intersession do not attend. Part of the problem is that the transfer students do not have transportation during intersession.*
- *My personal opinion of year-round schooling is that it just makes sense, especially with young children.*
- *We pace our curriculum according to the natural breaks in the year, and we feel we've moved a little faster.*

Factors Affecting Implementation

The helping teacher reported that Optional Extended Year (OEY) funds were used to support intersession activities. Ms. Garcia considers the March 1997 intersession very successful because additional funds were available. Ortega was able to use Title I and OEY funds to pay for a clerk, a secretary, two administrators, a teaching assistant, and several special activities.

Ms. Garcia says that the year-round calendar puts a strain on the budget. It is necessary to apply for grants or be prepared to cut other places in the budget to support intersession activities. She gave the following recommendations for the implementation of a successful year-round program:

- *Teacher selection is critical for the intersessions.*
- *Keep in close and continual contact with parents.*
- *Inform parents of the reasons for intersessions.*
- *Present intersessions as an opportunity that only "special" students get invited to attend.*

Longitudinal Achievement

Ortega is in its third year of implementation of the year-round calendar. Figures 11and 12 present the average TLI by disaggregated group in reading and mathematics, respectively, for the past four years. In the year after adopting the year-round calendar (1994-95), students at Ortega showed a slight increase in their average TLI in reading for all students and across all disaggregated groups. These increases in reading have remained fairly consistent over the past three years, with the exception of African American students, whose scores have shown a decrease

between 1994 and 1997 (72.4 to 69.0. The average TLI scores in mathematics increased in 1995-96 across all groups, but showed a subsequent decline.

Figure 11: Ortega Elementary TAAS Reading TLI by Disaggregated Group, 1994 through 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)

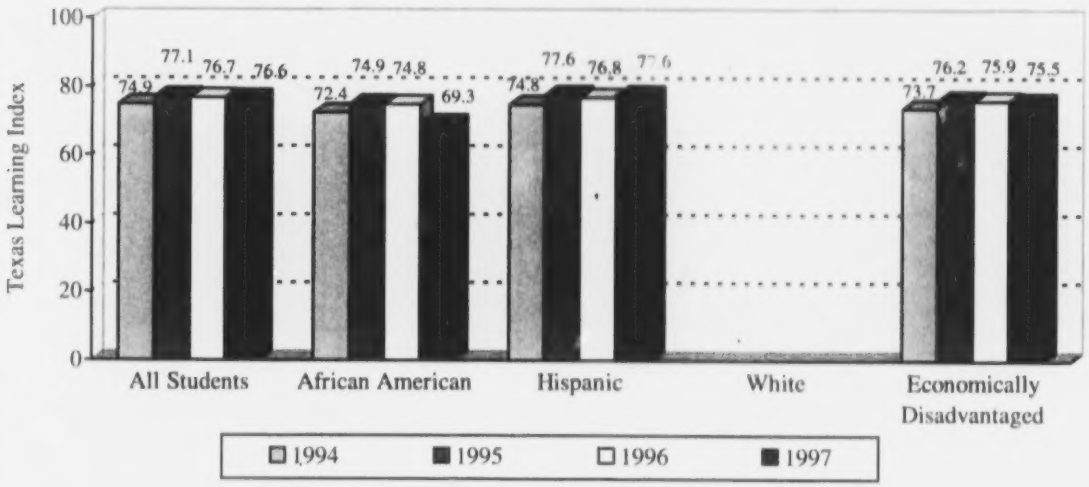
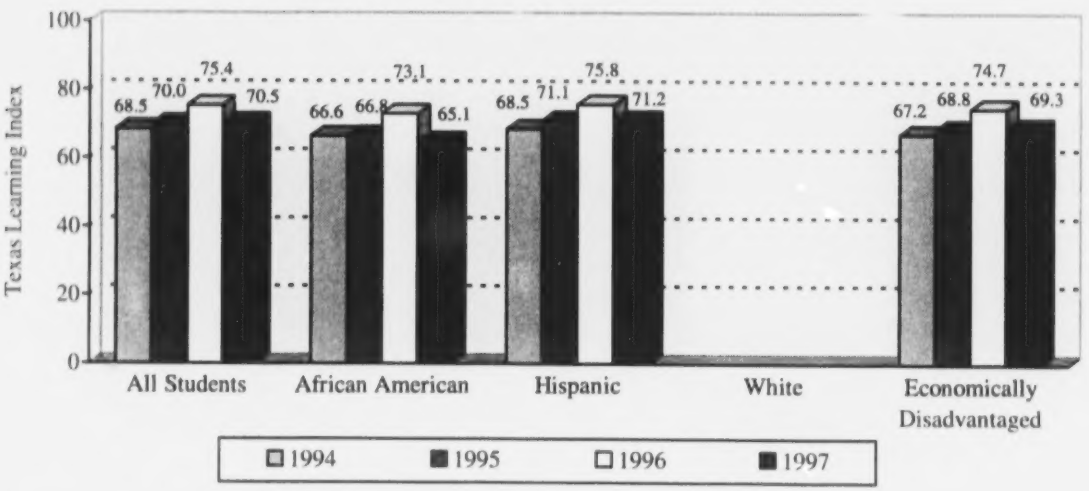


Figure 12: Ortega Elementary TAAS Mathematics TLI by Disaggregated Group, 1994 through 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)



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ST. ELMO ELEMENTARY

St. Elmo Elementary, located in south Austin, was built in 1960. Their 1996-97 enrollment consisted of 461 students, 67% of whom are Hispanic, 25% Anglo/Other, and 8% African American. Of these students, 79% are from low-income families. St. Elmo is a pre-K through grade 5 campus.

Intersessions

St. Elmo became a year-round school during the 1994-95 school year, making this the third year of program implementation. During the 1996-97 intersessions, the instructional program emphasized reading, writing, and mathematics. Thematic units and hands-on activities were interwoven into the instruction to make learning relevant to the students. Teachers received team planning time. In addition, professional staff development was provided in ways to focus instruction to address different learning styles. Parents were invited to attend orientation sessions for each intersession, and were provided training and encouragement in helping their child at home with specific study skills.

St. Elmo served 284 kindergarten through grade 5 students during the 1996-97 intersessions. One hundred thirty-seven students attended the November intersession, and 147 students attended the March intersession.

Principal Interview

The principal of St. Elmo, Arturo Arce, thinks that the year-round calendar makes a difference academically for the students. Students who did not pass TAAS or students in need of academic assistance can be targeted and invited to attend intersessions.

Mr. Arce says that teachers love the year-round calendar. The intersessions provide teachers an opportunity to earn extra money or a needed vacation time. Students who attend the intersessions benefit from smaller classes and a relaxed classroom atmosphere, as well as a break.

Teachers and principals at other campuses have commented that some of the districtwide competitions occur immediately after the March break, which presents a problem for students and teachers preparing for these competitions. Mr. Arce was very proud to note that the Music Memory team from St. Elmo placed first in the districtwide Music Memory Contest in April, despite this scheduling inconvenience.

A disadvantage of the year-round calendar can occur when families go to Mexico during the November intersession and do not return until after the winter break, according to Mr. Arce. Teachers prepare work packets for these students to take with them.

Some parents have difficulty with babysitting when older siblings are in school. However, childcare is available for intersession and non-intersession students for a nominal cost.

Teacher Responses

The teachers at St. Elmo say that they have divided the curriculum into three themes to match the three sessions during the year-round calendar. The three themes - survival, structure, and perspective - are aligned across grade levels.

Teachers overwhelmingly believe that students retain more of the subject matter over the shorter breaks. They do not spend as much time reteaching material, but only have to review what was taught immediately before the breaks. One teacher said the intersessions have provided her with a special opportunity to grow closer to the students attending the Academy and the staff that are teaching intersession. This sense of family and a common goal are factors associated with successful schools. Other responses from teachers include the following:

- *The year-round calendar is motivating and exciting, and each year the staff has developed a more focused curriculum and has planned more initiatives for our students.*
- *The intersession allows students who are finding difficulty in the regular classroom to receive instruction at a different level and in a different manner than they are used to.*
- *Students come back after an intersession and start right in with routines and new material as if they had not been away.*
- *I think of the year as divided into three major teaching times and I align certain benchmarks to be reached within those three major times. I do some major reevaluating of teaching strategies and what is going on in my classroom at the end of those three time frames.*

Factors Affecting Implementation

It is important to know what is expected at the campus during and immediately following the November and March intersessions, according to Mr. Arce. It can be a scramble to meet deadlines when school starts after the break if not prepared.

Mr. Arce says that he personally loves the year-round calendar, although, *"a great deal of coordination must be done to get everything to gel."* Mr. Arce advises other principals who are interested in implementing the year-round calendar to first get support from faculty and staff before going to the parents and community.

Longitudinal Achievement

St. Elmo is in its third year of implementation of the year-round calendar. Figures 13 and 14 present the average TLI by disaggregated group in reading and mathematics, respectively, for the past four years. In the year after adopting the year-round calendar (1994-95), students at St. Elmo showed an increase in their average TLI in reading for all students and across all disaggregated groups. In general, these reading scores have been maintained or have increased in subsequent years. Average TLI scores in mathematics have shown steady increases in most cases over the past four years, in particular with the Hispanic students (59.2 – 70.0).

Figure 13: St. Elmo Elementary TAAS Reading TLI by Disaggregated Group, 1994 through 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)

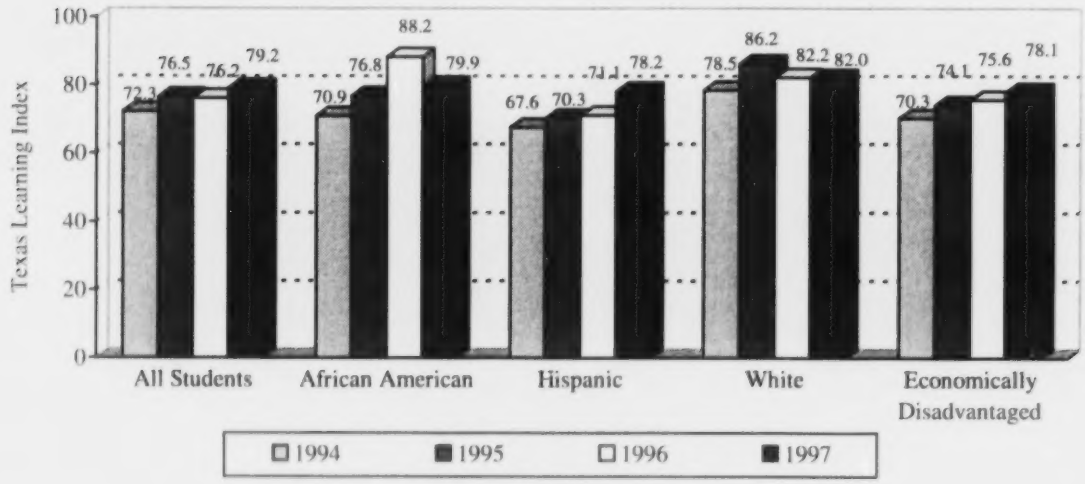
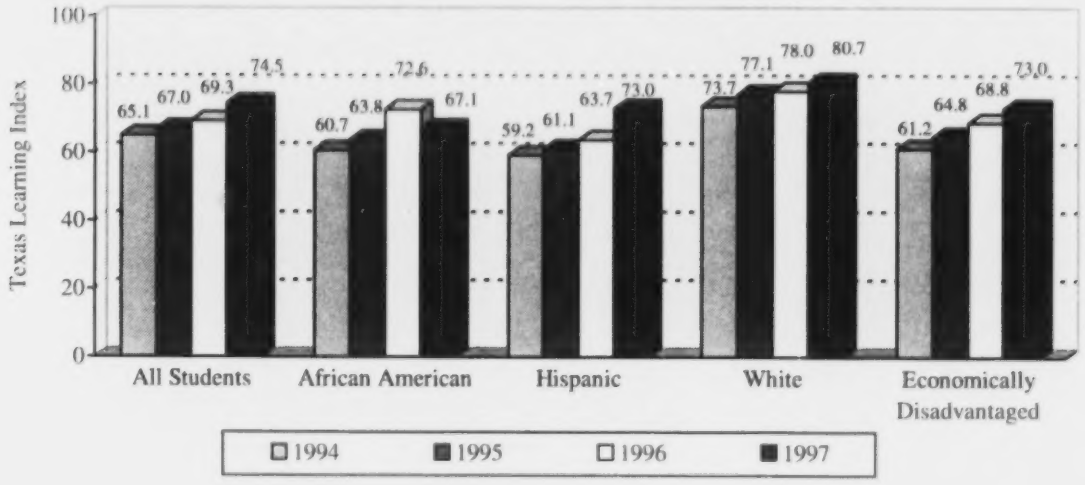


Figure 14: St. Elmo Elementary TAAS Mathematics TLI by Disaggregated Group, 1994 through 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)



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SANCHEZ ELEMENTARY

Built in south Austin in 1976, Sanchez Elementary had an enrollment of 464 students during the 1996-97 school year. Of these 464 students, 96% were Hispanic, 3% were Anglo/Other, and 1% were African American. In addition, 86% of these students were from low-income families. Sanchez is a pre-K through grade 6 campus.

Intersessions

Sanchez was the first school in AISD to participate in the year-round program, and is in its fifth year of implementation. During the 1996-97 intersessions, interdisciplinary, thematic instruction was provided in a mixed-age setting. The final Saturday of each intersession featured a study trip designed to support and enrich the children's understanding of the thematic concepts presented during the intersession. Participating teachers received training in curriculum writing and design prior to each intersession, and produced original, interdisciplinary curriculum units appropriate to help students meet state content and student performance standards. A Parent Involvement Day was presented at each intersession during which parents were invited to visit classes and observe students' work.

Sanchez holds intersessions during November, March, and July. Criteria for attending the Academy (the Academy is the week of instruction during the intersession) include: students having the greatest need on the TAAS scores in grades 3-6; teacher recommendation at primary grades; and bilingual status of pre-K and K students. Extend-a-Care offers childcare during intersession at Sanchez. The staff of eight teachers, an assistant principal, and a clerical support person plan together. TAAS skills are incorporated, but in fun activities. Optional Extended Year funds limit the number of students to 16 to 1 teacher.

Two hundred and seventeen students attended the one-week all-day Aztec Academy intersession program. The number of students in attendance was 110 at the November intersession and 107 at the March intersession.

Sanchez has received much acclaim for pioneering year-round schools in Austin and Central Texas. Articles featuring the Sanchez year-round school program have appeared in the *TEPSA Journal*, spring 1995, and in *The Year-Rounder*, winter 1996. In addition, the principal and staff have made presentations about the Sanchez year-round program at the several conferences including Year-Round Education state conferences and Title I Parent conferences.

Principal Interview

Mr. Ed Leo has been principal of Sanchez since before the implementation of the year-round calendar. He says that Sanchez was not included in the schools that were originally considered for year-round education because Sanchez was not overcrowded, as were the other schools asked to participate. Sanchez researched year-round education in other parts of the country, surveyed their parents and teachers, and had 95% support for year-round education. Sanchez asked the Year-Round Task Force for permission to pilot the program, but with a single-track plan rather than a multi-track plan. The Board accepted the Sanchez plan and the school became the only one to pilot the year-round calendar in 1992-93.

Mr. Leo says that one-third of the Sanchez students attend the Academy during intersessions. The advantage of the single-track year-round calendar is that students get help during the course of the year. Parents, teachers, and students like the year-round calendar, he says. Students like the study trips, mixed-age, and thematic sessions. Parents need childcare, so this works for them, according to Mr. Leo. Teachers can cover more material, more effectively and thoroughly, because students are always being challenged academically, he says.

The year-round calendar affects the sixth grade band and orchestra program. Because the instructor is on a regular-calendar contract, there is no band or orchestra program at Sanchez in June.

Teacher Responses

The teachers at Sanchez, who responded to the survey and/or were interviewed, were very supportive of the year-round calendar. They feel that they are able to expand on what they are teaching and cover information more in-depth. Other comments made by teachers at Sanchez include the following:

- *Year-round school makes the school year more manageable for students.*
- *I think it's valuable, as an educator, to have time off during the year, which provides time for reflection on classroom practice; to reevaluate what's working well, what isn't, and what can be done to fix it.*
- *Teachers provide packets of work to be done during our breaks, to keep skills sharp and to promote year-long learning.*
- *Teachers tend to many doctor/dentist visits and other home life demands during breaks throughout the year. Therefore, we can focus more on school when we are back at work.*
- *Student behavior management is easier because of breaks. Students get along better with each other and with their teachers.*
- *The year-round calendar benefits the students of this area.*

Factors Affecting Implementation

Mr. Leo says that some of the problems of implementation have been alleviated with the addition of 11 schools to the year-round calendar. He says that "*although the year-round school is more work for administrators on campus and at central administration, the benefits to children make it worthwhile.*"

The breaks were used to offer extra instruction time to students in the greatest need of academic assistance. The Sanchez Academy has been a great success with the students, teachers, parents, and the community, says Mr. Leo. He believes that "*the effectiveness of the year-round calendar depends on what you do during the intersessions.*"

Mr. Leo says that principals should be familiar with ways to improve achievement. He says that "*the year-round calendar is locked into the greatest needs of children for schools with federal funding. Middle-class and white collar families might need a different plan.*"

Longitudinal Achievement

Sanchez has been following the year-round calendar longer than any other school in the district, being in its fifth year of implementation. Figures 15 and 16 present the average TLI by

disaggregated group in reading and mathematics, respectively, for the past four years, which as long as TLI scores have been available. Scores in both reading and mathematics showed an increase across all groups in 1994-95, which was the second year Sanchez was a year-round school. Although scores for 1996-97 are higher in both reading and mathematics across all disaggregated groups than they were in 1993-94, the scores are lower than they were in 1994-95.

Figure 15: Sanchez Elementary TAAS Reading TLI by Disaggregated Group, 1994 through 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)

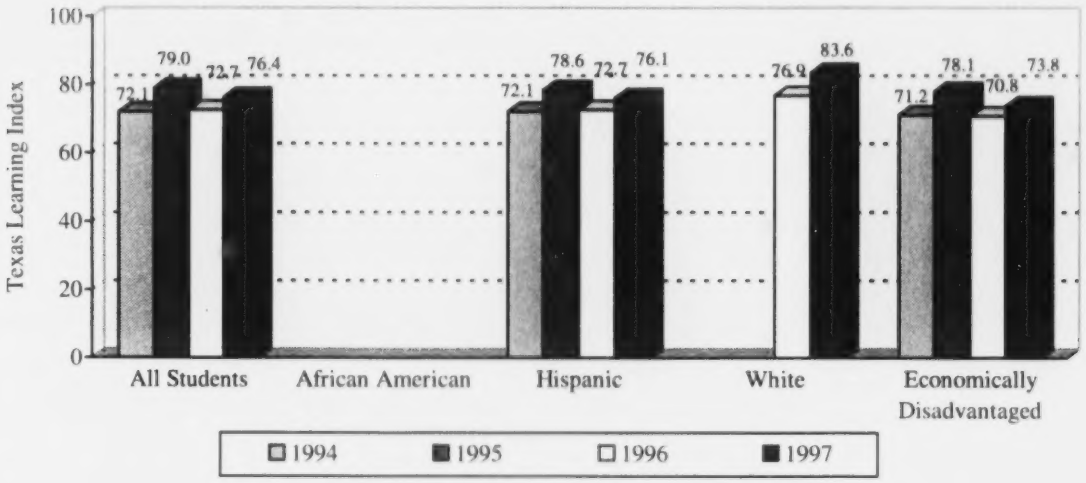
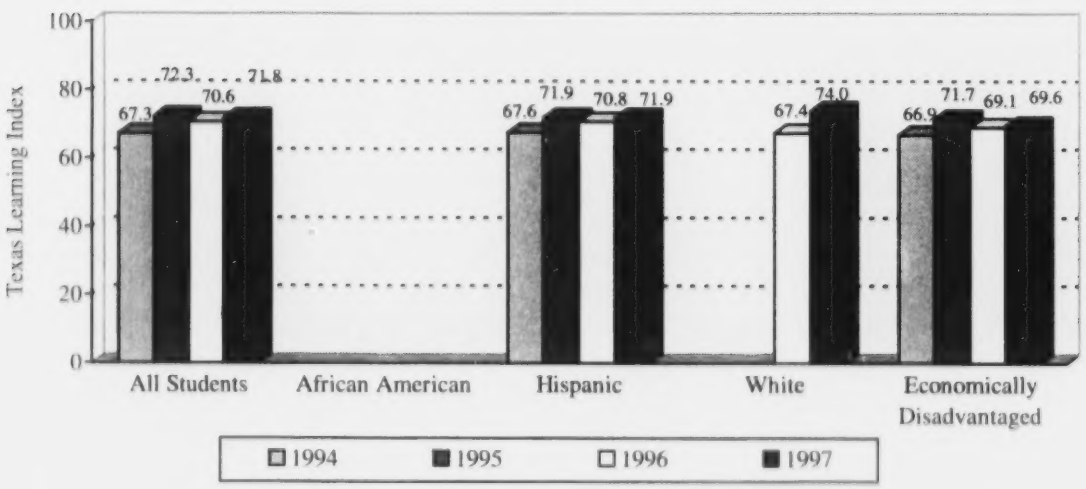


Figure 16: Sanchez Elementary TAAS Mathematics TLI by Disaggregated Group, 1994 through 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)



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WIDEN ELEMENTARY

Widen Elementary, established in 1986, is located in south Austin. There were 991 students enrolled at Widen during the 1996-97 school year. Of these students, 66% were Hispanic, 25% were African American, and 9% were Anglo/Other. In addition, 89% were from low-income families. Widen is a pre-K through grade 5 campus.

Intersessions

Widen has participated in the year-round program since 1994. During the 1996-97 school year, classes focused on a single, unique theme during each intersession. Emphasis was on hands-on, interactive learning activities with the use of manipulatives, games, literature, and technology. Teachers involved in the intersessions received professional staff development on developing an integrated curriculum unit based on a selected theme, along with training on the use of software that supported the unit objectives. The parent/family awareness component was addressed through parent conferences before each intersession to inform parents about the classes and the reasons that students need to attend. In addition, teachers sent home an Intersession Progress Report with each student the last day of the intersession classes.

Widen invited students in kindergarten through grade 5 to attend the 1996-97 intersessions. Widen (the largest of the year-round elementary schools) had the largest number of students attend the intersessions-355 in November and 288 in March.

Principal Interview

The principal of Widen, Ms. Lucila Duncan, says that students benefit from the year-round calendar. Teachers can do early intervention with students during the intersessions. The criteria for participation in intersession include any of the following: TAAS achievement, reading progress, teacher recommendation, need for childcare; or identified gifted and talented.

A year-round incentive grant from the state is used to fund two gifted and talented (G/T) teachers for intersession to provide enrichment activities for a group of G/T students. Widen has also collaborated with other organizations (e.g., Austin Parks and Recreation, Austin Lyric Opera, Austin Children's Museum, Sunshine Camp, St. Edward's University) to provide interesting programs during intersessions.

Ms. Duncan responded to teachers' need for professional development during their breaks by arranging with the Professional Development Academy for staff development on campus. An Academics 2000 grant pays for a staff development stipend during intersessions for teachers to visit other schools that are in session. This gives teachers an opportunity to observe programs and innovations in practice.

The disadvantages that Ms. Duncan referred to include deadlines and scheduling that come from central administration. As other principals noted, Ms. Duncan says that it seems as if central administration sometimes forgets that year-round schools are on a different calendar when setting deadlines (e.g., Science Fair, purchase orders). The deadlines are difficult to meet because the office staff are not on a 12-month schedule (they are on break when some of the deadlines occur).

The principal says that a few teachers transferred initially because their own children were enrolled in other schools that were on a regular calendar. Overall, Ms. Duncan feels that the teacher retention rate is better than it was under the regular-calendar plan.

Teacher Responses

Teachers at Widen say they can readjust strategies during the breaks. With the year-round calendar, teachers at Widen say they can use the breaks to plan and refocus, unlike teachers at a regular-calendar campus.

There can be drawbacks to the year-round calendar, similar to the ones listed at other schools, according to teachers. One teacher said that she could not work on her Master's Degree at the University of Texas because calendars do not match. It is also difficult to attend any professional development during November and March if the teacher works with the intersession program.

The year-round calendar works well with special education students, according to one teacher. The short breaks throughout the year minimize review time, and students retain what they learn better. Some other comments by teachers at Widen include the following:

- *Students get further academically because of intersession activities.*
- *Students are ready to learn when they return from breaks.*
- *Parents like intersession because breaks are short enough to keep kids from getting bored.*
- *The year-round calendar fits "mental clocks" better.*

Factors Affecting Implementation

When the district invited schools to participate in the year-round calendar, Widen decided that they were not ready to commit. Also, the multi-track plan was not appealing to Widen parents. With more planning and parent input, the single-track plan was adopted to begin in the 1994-95 school year.

Ms. Duncan says that it is essential to ensure adequate funding for intersession each year. Before a school can move to the year-round calendar, the principal needs to get the support of staff because the move to year-round will not work without this support. Knowledge of the year-round calendar by the community and the police is important so that students will not be mistaken for truants during intersessions.

Achievement

Widen is in its third year of implementation of the year-round calendar. Figures 17 and 18 present the average TLI by disaggregated group in reading and mathematics, respectively, for the past four years. In the year after adopting the year-round calendar (1994-95), students at Widen showed an increase in their average TLI in reading for all students and across all disaggregated groups. These scores have either been maintained or have increased slightly over subsequent years for all groups. The average TLI scores for mathematics, however, have consistently increased over the past four years, in particular for African American students (57.5 to 71.4) and for economically disadvantaged students (59.3 to 73.7).

Figure 17: Widen Elementary TAAS Reading TLI by Disaggregated Group, 1994 through 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)

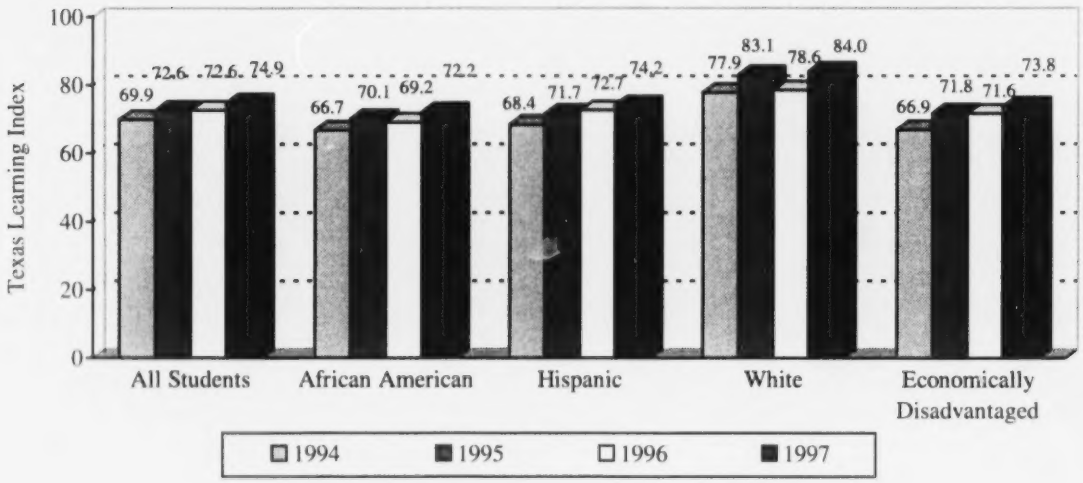
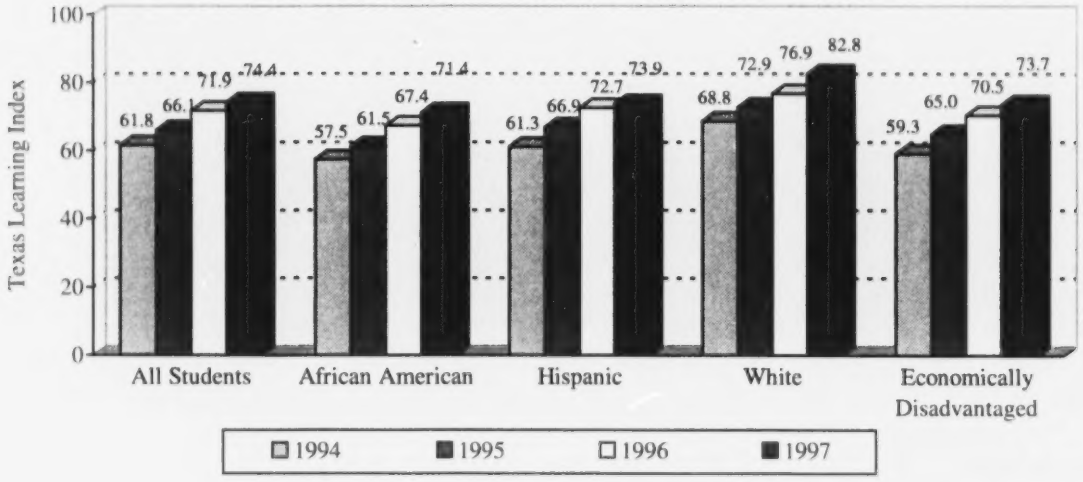


Figure 18: Widen Elementary TAAS Mathematics TLI by Disaggregated Group, 1994 through 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)



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WINN ELEMENTARY

Winn Elementary, located in northeast Austin, was built in 1970. During the 1996-97 school year, the enrollment consisted of 548 students. Of these students, 69% were African American, 27% were Hispanic, and 4% were Anglo/Other. In addition, 89% of the students were from low-income families. Winn is a pre-K through grade 5 campus.

Intersessions

Winn Elementary became a year-round school in 1994. During the 1996-97 school year, both intersession programs incorporated reading and mathematics skills targeted at low-achieving students. The focus of the professional development for the participating teachers was on literacy training. Reading, writing, and technology training were used to prepare effective instructional strategies that could be integrated into the classroom. Also during the year, the parent trainer conducted morning classes for parents in the computer labs. This training was offered so parents could assist and enrich their child's learning environment.

The total attendance at the Winn intersessions during the 1996-97 school year was173. Eighty-seven students participated in November and 86 participated in March.

Principal Interview

Dr. Suzanne Cunningham, principal of Winn, believes the greatest benefit of the year-round calendar is the continual learning for students. Since the maximum amount of time that a student is out of school on the year-round calendar is six weeks, she feels that students have less opportunity to lose skills gained.

Another advantage of the year-round calendar is that parents do not have to look for long-term childcare. The smaller breaks make arranging for the care of children more manageable.

The retention of teachers has been a benefit resulting from the year-round calendar. There are more teachers who want to transfer to Winn because of the year-round calendar, and no teachers have asked to transfer out because of the calendar.

Teachers and students like the calendar, but it can interfere with summer plans in June. There are occasional conflicts with summer camp activities that start before the administration of the TAAS test. Teachers who want to go to summer school at the universities have difficulty scheduling classes.

Dr. Cunningham says that 90% of the parents support intersessions. She shared a success story during the interview about a parent who "adopted" a neighbor child who needed to attend the intersession (although her own child did not). The parent registered the neighbor child for intersession, woke him up each day, and saw that he attended intersession classes throughout the year.

Teacher Responses

The March 1997 intersession was a hit with the students according to one teacher. Students planted two gardens in addition to the academic work. Students used math to measure and make calculations about the garden, used knowledge gained from planting the garden for

writing assignments, and put on a play about their experiences. Teachers got donations from local nurseries and home centers for the plants and supplies.

Another teacher said that she uses the intersession to evaluate targeted students. She can determine an appropriate treatment to be used with the students who need specialized assistance when school reconvenes. Other comments made by teachers about the year-round calendar at Winn include the following:

- *Test scores do seem to be improving.*
- *I believe there is less reteach at the start of the year.*
- *The kids come back from intersessions very calm and eager to learn.*
- *The intersessions in November and March are at an excellent time of the year for outdoor activities.*
- *Teachers can try new strategies and take them back to the regular session.*

Factors Affecting Implementation

Dr. Cunningham has experienced some difficulties in coordination of the year-round calendar. Like many other principals, she says that *"it seems like the main administration complex forgets when the year-round schools are in and out of session."* There have been repeated mistakes with the operation of the special education bus runs. Another difficulty arises due to the budget cutoff date being the same for all schools, even though the year-round schools are in session six weeks later than the regular-calendar schools.

In spite of the difficulties, Dr. Cunningham says to schools that are thinking about implementing the year-round calendar, *"Do it! It is hard work, especially the first year, but it is worth it."*

Longitudinal Achievement

Winn is in its third year of implementation of the year-round calendar. Figures 19 and 20 present the average TLI by disaggregated group in reading and mathematics, respectively, for the past four years. Reading scores showed a slight increase in the first year of year-round schooling, and these increased scores have generally been maintained. However, the average TLI scores in mathematics have shown a more distinct trend, with steady increases over the four-year period. In particular, Hispanic students experienced a gain of almost 8 TLI points between 1995 and 1996.

Figure 19: Winn Elementary TAAS Reading TLI by Disaggregated Group, 1994 through 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)

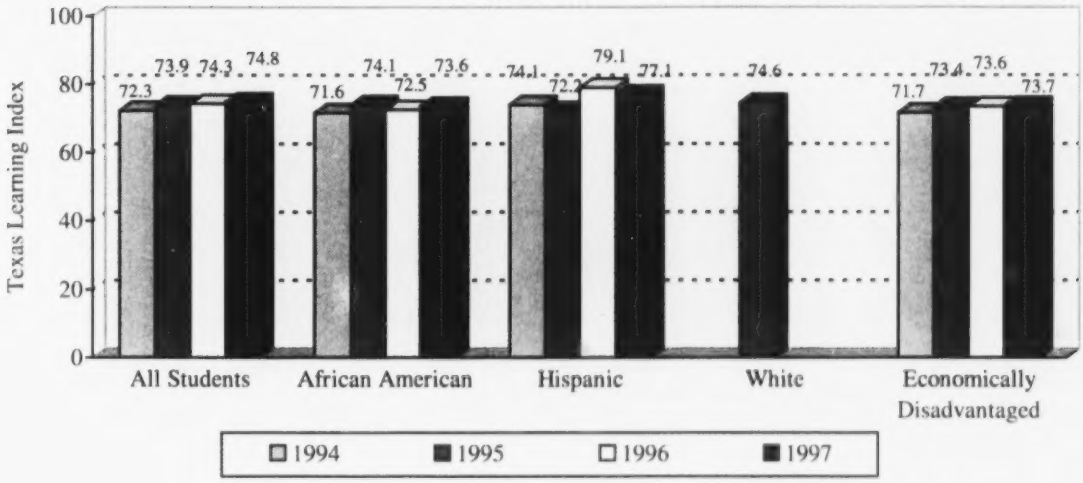
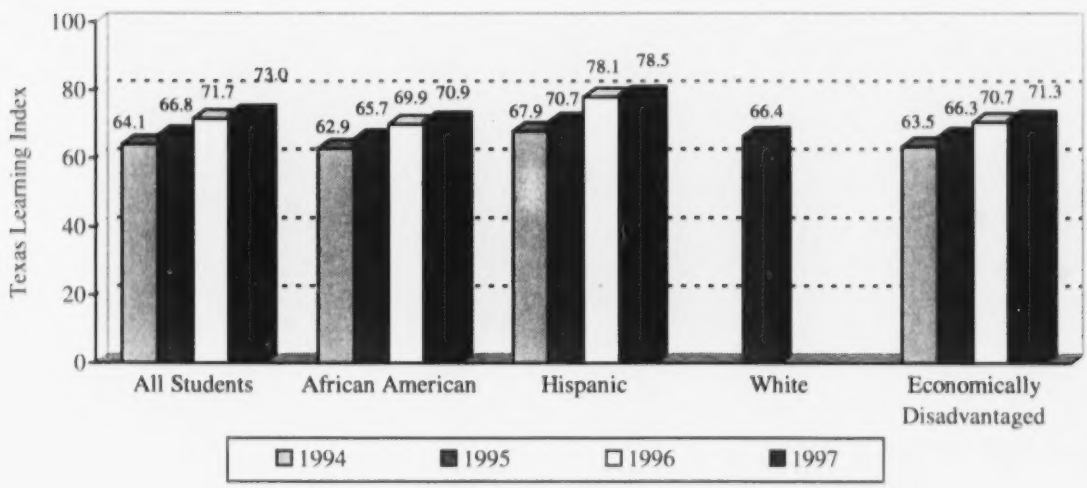


Figure 20: Winn Elementary TAAS Mathematics TLI by Disaggregated Group, 1994 through 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)



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WOOLDRIDGE ELEMENTARY

Wooldridge Elementary was built in 1969 in north Austin, and is home to a diverse student population. During the 1996-97 school year, 941 students were enrolled at Wooldridge. Of these, 51% were Hispanic, 28% were African American, 17% were Anglo/Other, and 4% were Asian. In addition, 82% of these students were from low-income families. Wooldridge is a pre-K through grade 5 campus.

Intersessions

This past school year was the second year of implementation for Wooldridge's year-round program. The 1996-97 intersessions used a thematic approach and enhanced all lessons with computer assisted instruction. There was a focus on early literacy intervention and students were involved in guided reading and whole language activities to develop skills. Intersession staff received professional development to familiarize them with innovative methods and materials that were used during the intersessions. Two half-day curriculum development sessions were also held to focus on problem-solving strategies in reading and mathematics. The parent/family awareness component was addressed through orientation sessions held before each intersession. Parents were encouraged to attend at least one day of class and to participate in the intersession activities. Also, parents were expected to assist and monitor their child with work packets received during the intersessions. Finally, a follow-up session was held to receive parent input, evaluate the intersessions and their child's progress, and make plans for the upcoming year.

The 1996-97 Academy program was held for two weeks during the November and March breaks for five hours per day. TAAS skills were incorporated in fun activities. Criteria for attending the intersession were low performance on TAAS and teacher recommendation. A total of 496 students attended the 1996-97 intersessions-219 in November and 277 in March.

Principal Interview

The principal of Wooldridge, Mr. Joe Lowe, believes that students and teachers benefit from the year-round calendar by having several small breaks during the year, rather than one long summer break. He says that students retain more information during the shorter breaks, although it is not as much as he had hoped.

Teachers benefit not only by the breaks, but also by the opportunity to work during the intersessions and make supplemental income, advantages noted by other principals. Families also have the advantage of traveling at several times during the academic year.

There are disadvantages, as well, according to Mr. Lowe. He says that, with high student mobility, students could lose time in school if they transfer late in the year to a regular-calendar school. In-service in June can be a problem, also, since there are not enough funds available to hire substitutes for all teachers to attend professional development.

Teacher Responses

The teachers of Wooldridge believe that the year-round calendar is good for student learning. One teacher added that the intersessions would be even better if enrollment could be open to all students. There could be camp-type activities for students who are not as much in need of

academics. The teacher commented that this suggested open enrollment for intersessions could work if community groups would provide support and volunteers.

Another teacher disagreed that the district programs and activities are coordinated with the year-round calendar. She said "*year-round teachers get many notices during the off-time that we could have been informed about sooner.*" Other comments about the year-round calendar made by Wooldridge teachers include the following direct quotations:

- *Teachers are less burned out and teacher attendance is better.*
- *Teachers can regroup during intersession; figure out what they need to change or improve for students; plan and get new ideas; and prepare for the next session.*
- *Students have more time to grow during longer school year. First graders begin to blossom during May.*
- *Parents can work with students on the packets during breaks.*
- *Low-achieving students have a change to "catch-up" during intersessions.*

Factors Affecting Implementation

Mr. Lowe says that the teachers like the year-round calendar very much. However, they are not sure about the support from central administration for the year-round calendar.

Extensive planning and coordination is necessary to have instruction during the intersession. Planning for the intersession must happen during the regular session.

Budgeting for intersession is also an important consideration, according to Mr. Lowe. Principals should be aware of possible funding sources for the intersessions. According to Mr. Lowe, an intersession at Wooldridge costs at least $17,000. Mr. Lowe gives the following advice to principals who are considering implementation of the year-round calendar at their campuses:

- *Be sure that you have the parents' support.*
- *Decide on your curriculum for intersession.*
- *Have teacher and staff support before you start.*

Achievement

Wooldridge is in its second year of implementation of the year-round calendar. Figures 21 and 22 present the average TLI by disaggregated group in reading and mathematics, respectively, for the past four years. Average TLI scores in reading increased for all groups except for African American students in 1995-96, the first year Wooldridge was a year-round school. However, these reading scores decreased slightly in 1996-97. For mathematics, average TLI scores have steadily increased over the four-year period, with slightly greater increases in the first year the school followed the year-round calendar.

Figure 21: Wooldridge Elementary TAAS Reading TLI by Disaggregated Group, 1994 through 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)

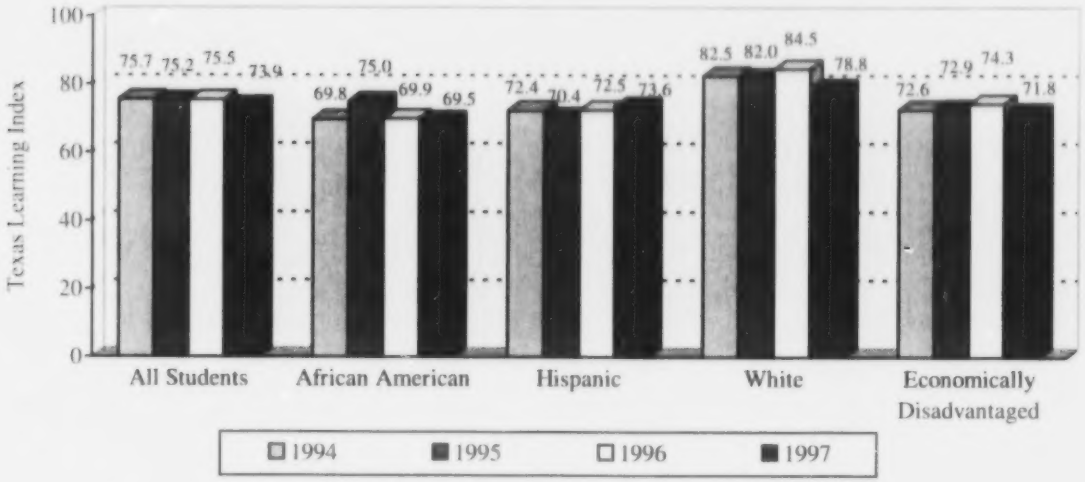
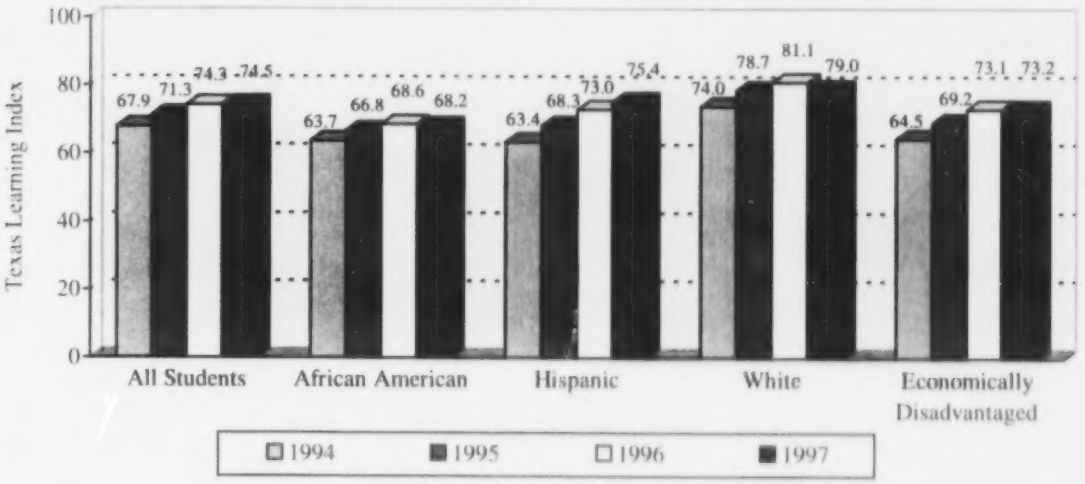


Figure 22: Wooldridge Elementary TAAS Mathematics TLI by Disaggregated Group, 1994 through 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)



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WEBB MIDDLE SCHOOL

Webb Middle School, built in north Austin in 1968, has been involved in the year-round program since 1995. During the 1996-97 school year, the enrollment at Webb consisted of 710 students. Of these, 68% were Hispanic, 20% were African American, 11% were Anglo/Other, and approximately 1% were Asian. In addition, 85% of the students were from low-income families. Webb is a grade 6-8 campus.

Intersessions

Since Webb is the only middle school involved in the year-round program at AISD, its program description is unique. Webb operates a Transition Summer School Program for incoming 6th graders. The purpose of this program is to help the incoming students adjust to life in a middle school. The students experience 90-minute classes and move from one class to another (reading, writing, and mathematics). In addition, the program helps to familiarize the students with the facility and life at a middle school. Teachers who participate in the summer school program receive training on problem-solving techniques, developing and writing interdisciplinary units, and use of mathematics manipulatives. The parent/family awareness component is addressed through orientation meetings with parents before the transition program begins. In addition, parents are invited to a meeting to discuss adolescent characteristics.

The November and March intersessions involve students in comprehensive language and math development activities. During intersession classes, targeted "borderline" students are taught a curriculum focused on TAAS objectives for mathematics, reading, and writing. Specific TAAS mathematics objectives and TAAS writing modes are the focus of the two-week intensive instructional program. Teachers receive training on cognitive learning strategies, which have been proven successful in producing learning among low-income students. Parents are contacted and informed of the program components, teacher expectations, and rationale for the student's inclusion in the program. Parents are also contacted if their child is absent from intersession classes.

Webb Middle School had a total of 255 grade 6-8 students attend the 1996-97 intersessions. The attendance at the intersessions was 98 students in November and 157 students in March.

Principal Interview

Mr. Al Mindiz-Melton was in his first year as principal at Webb in 1996-97. He says that students who are behind in their classes can attend intersessions and benefit from smaller classes and more individualized attention. Students and teachers benefit from the intermittent breaks during the year. Mr. Melton reported that year-round school does not benefit parents of middle school students.

The students and teachers involved with the intersession instruction are very supportive of the program. Parents appreciate more learning time for their children. However, the year-round calendar has been a divisive issue at Webb. Core academic teachers are in favor of the year-round calendar because of additional instruction time for students who need it, and the special area

teachers are opposed to the year-round calendar for middle school because of the conflicts with districtwide and statewide competitions.

Since Webb is the only middle school that is on the year-round calendar, some special situations arise. Mr. Melton says that the year-round calendar is out of alignment with the district calendar. He believes that *"year-round education is not a district goal or priority so there is no support (other than financial) from central administration."* Also, the Alternative Learning Center (ALC), which is an alternative education site for discipline referrals, is closed in June leaving the middle school without that support.

There is no allowance made for the year-round calendar in planning by central administration and the statewide University Interscholastic League (UIL) committee, he says. Middle school students participate in the statewide UIL in academics, fine arts, and athletics. Some of the districtwide and statewide competitions happen immediately after the March intersession. These competitions include districtwide activities such as Music Memory, Art Fair, and the Science Fair and statewide UIL band and orchestra competition. The special area teachers (music, art, P.E.) often work with students outside of school (on their own time) during these breaks so that their students will be prepared for the competition.

Webb students (especially grade 8) are not involved with some of the citywide summer programs from which they could benefit. Some of these programs include summer school, Austin Interfaith Job Fair, and the City of Austin lifeguard program. Grade 8 students also miss out on summer band camps at the high school they will attend if the camp is in June.

Problems can arise, also, when a student transfers late in the school year. Grade 8 students must complete a specific number of instructional days to matriculate to high school. The AISD feeder high schools are cooperative, but out-of-district transfers can be a problem. Mr. Melton described a recent situation in which an eighth grade student transferred to another district, and the student was not promoted to the ninth grade due to a lack of attendance days.

Teacher Responses

Teachers response to year-round education for middle school students is divided. Some of the teachers who responded to the survey were strongly in favor of YRE. These teachers support the year-round calendar for many of the same reasons that the elementary teachers like YRE. They believe that the year-round calendar provides a chance for teachers to earn income, a time for teachers to rest, a time for teachers to have uninterrupted and intense planning time; and a break for students.

The teachers who are strongly opposed to the year-round calendar did a report on YRE at Webb. The group of teachers compiled a list of reasons for dissatisfaction with the year-round schedule. Some of these reasons include the following:

- *Grade 8 students lose three weeks preparing for the TAAS Writing test which is given in February (the same time as the regular-calendar schools) because of the November intersession.* (TEA does have an alternate date for TAAS writing, but it occurs during the March intersession.)
- *TAAS assessment is administered in June, a month in which Webb's absentee rate soared.*
- *UIL participation is more difficult for a year-round secondary school because of November and March breaks.*

- *YRE affects scheduling, particularly in the math department, because TAAS scores are not received until August.*
- *There is no synchronization of schedules within the vertical team. Barrington is the only feeder school to Webb that is year-round.*
- *Webb is the only AISD secondary school that is using the year-round calendar.*

Factor Affecting Implementation

The factors affecting the implementation of the year-round calendar are more complicated at the middle school level than at the elementary level. When asked what advice he would give to other middle school principals who are considering implementation of the year-round calendar at their campuses, Mr. Melton said, *"Don't do it!"* He says that the commitment was made to go to year-round education and the majority of the staff supports it, but *"nonalignment with the district calendar is a big problem."* The district will need to support alternative calendars through scheduling of activities being sensitive to the year-round calendar, according to the principal. UIL competition would need to be addressed by the state.

Mr. Melton says that there have been no teacher transfer requests, but the issue is divisive for the staff. He says that the staff supports the year-round calendar two-to-one, but opponents are strongly opposed.

Longitudinal Achievement

Webb is in its second year of implementation of the year-round calendar. Figures 23 and 24 present the average TLI by disaggregated group in reading and mathematics, respectively, for the past four years.. In reading, students across all groups have shown a slight increase in average TLI scores over the four-year period, and scores do not seem to have been affected significantly by adopting the year-round calendar. Average TLI scores in mathematics, however, have shown a steady increase over the past four years, with the greatest gains in general during the first year that Webb followed the year-round calendar.

Figure 23: Webb Middle School TAAS Reading TLI by Disaggregated Group, 1994 through 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)

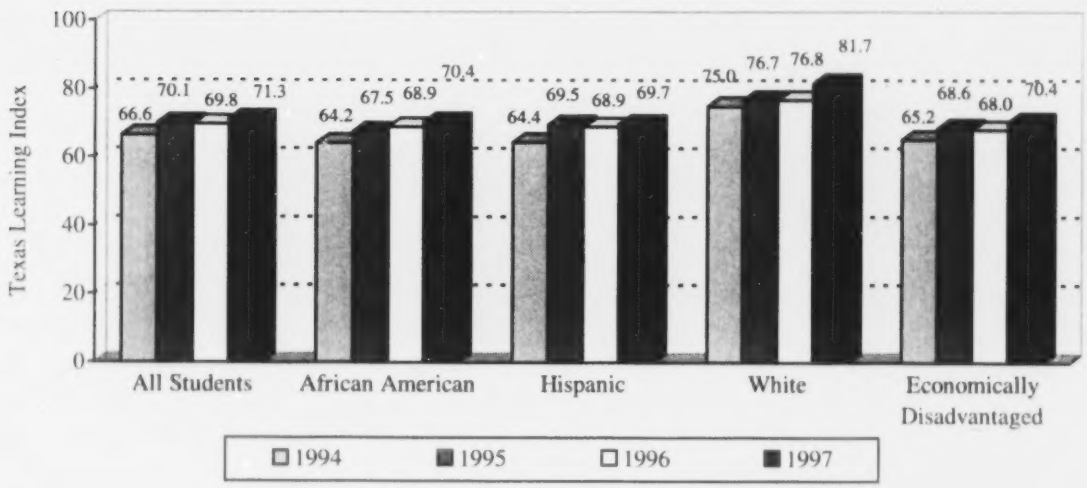
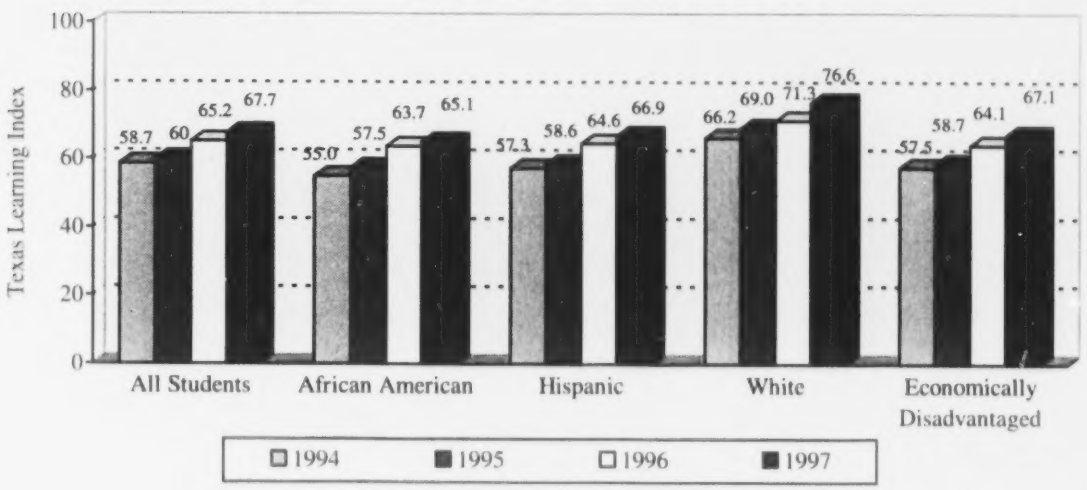


Figure 24: Webb Middle School TAAS Mathematics TLI by Disaggregated Group, 1994 through 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)



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SUMMARIES OF SURVEYS AND INTERVIEWS

YEAR-ROUND TEACHER SURVEY

Principals of year-round schools were asked to select one teacher from each grade level to complete the teacher survey. Several schools distributed surveys to all of their teachers. Eighty surveys were returned from year-round elementary teachers, and twenty-three surveys were returned by Webb Middle School teachers. Because it was not known exactly how many surveys were distributed in total, a return rate could not be calculated. A discussion of the elementary teacher surveys will be followed by a discussion of the middle school teacher survey data.

ELEMENTARY TEACHER SURVEY

Teaching Strategies

Results of the survey for elementary year-round teachers are presented in Table 1. On survey item one, a majority of the teachers who responded (64%) reported that their teaching strategies have changed as a result of teaching at a year-round school. Some of the teachers interviewed indicated that this was a "yes and no" question - "yes" because they were always looking for new teaching strategies, and "no" because "*no change is necessary.*" Another comment was, "*In the classroom, no; in planning units, yes.*"

Professional Development

Because teachers are in school in June, professional development opportunities may be affected. Survey item two asked teachers if the year-round calendar allowed them to take advantage of professional development opportunities. Reaction was split fairly evenly. Thirty-nine percent of teachers reported that the year-round calendar allows them the opportunity to take advantage of professional development, while 43% disagreed. Some teachers indicated that the district does not schedule PDA classes around the year-round calendar, although teachers acknowledged that there are currently more classes offered in November and July than were offered two years ago. Also, some teachers commented that their principal allows them to get a substitute when there is a class scheduled that they wish to attend. Other principals have arranged for a trainer to come to their campus to deliver professional development. However, there is a conflict with the year-round calendar and the summer college course schedule for teachers who want to pursue an advanced degree in the summer.

Support for Year-Round Schools

Teachers overwhelming agreed (96%) that the parents are supportive of intersession activities. This parental support is reflected in the percentage of targeted students who actually attend the intersessions. Eighty-one percent of teachers responded that more than 75% of targeted students participate in intersession activities. Teachers also feel (74%) that community members are supportive of intersession activities.

The teachers did not feel as much support from the district, however. Fifty-two percent of the teachers who responded to the survey do not believe that district programs and activities are coordinated with the year-round calendar. Many of the teachers (and principals) seem to feel that "*the district forgets about year-round schools.*" Table 1 contains the response rates to the year-round teacher survey items.

Table 1: 1997 Year-Round Teacher Survey
Elementary Schools (N=81)

SURVEY ITEM	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. **My teaching strategies have changed as a result of teaching at a year-round school.**	16 (20%)	35 (44%)	8 (10%)	20 (25%)	0 (0%)
2. **The year-round calendar allows me to take advantage of professional development opportunities (e.g., district- or state-sponsored training, college course work).**	8 (10%)	22 (29%)	14 (18%)	24 (31%)	9 (12%)
3. **District programs and activities are coordinated with the year-round calendar.**	2 (3%)	26 (34%)	9 (12%)	33 (43%)	7 (9%)
4. **Parents are supportive of intersession activities.**	37 (47%)	38 (49%)	2 (3%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)
5. **Community members are supportive of intersession activities.**	25 (32%)	33 (42%)	19 (24%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)
6. **What percentage of targeted students participates in intersession activities?**					
More than 90% = 17 (23%)					
75-90% = 42 (58%)					
50-74% = 13 (18%)					
Less than 50% = 1 (1%)					

Note. The values represent the number of responses to each item option. The numbers in parentheses represent the percent of teachers who responded to each item option.

Adaptations to the Curriculum

The year-round calendar divides the instructional year into three major segments. Teachers were asked if any adaptations to the standard curriculum were made at their campus in response to the year-round calendar. Teacher comments are reviewed with each individual school report and are summarized below.

- Teachers are able to work through the curriculum at a more constant pace.
- Re-teaching and reviewing are kept to a minimum; as a result, more material can be covered.
- Intersessions provide opportunities for including multi-disciplinary units, real-life activities, multi-age classes, and study trips.
- For students not attending intersessions, teachers assign packets of work to be completed (including TAAS preparation) and books to be read during the break.
- Intersessions are used for targeting students who need immediate intervention related to TAAS skills.
- Teachers provide more individualized instruction in order to address students' different learning styles.

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Effects of the Year-Round Calendar

Teachers were asked how changes in a school's schedule resulting from the adoption of the year-round calendar benefit students, parents, and teachers. Their comments are reviewed with each school report and are summarized below.

Benefits for students:

- Students retain more information.
- Students receive more days of formal and individualized instruction.
- Remediation can be addressed during the intersession breaks; teachers assess, evaluate, and modify more often and more quickly.
- The structure of the classroom is not interrupted with long breaks.
- Bilingual students have more consistent exposure to English.
- Students are excited about coming to school.
- Students "blossom" during intersessions.
- Students experience less boredom and, therefore, are less likely to get into trouble over the summer.
- Students return from breaks rested and relaxed; they are better focused during the school year.
- TAAS scores have risen.

Benefits for parents:

- Parents can work with children on the assignment packets sent home to be completed during the breaks.
- Parents participate more in school activities and communicate more frequently with teachers.
- Families can take vacations during the non-peak season.

Benefits for teachers:

- Teachers can use breaks for planning or making other school preparations.
- During intersessions, teachers can revitalize their teaching strategies and attitudes.
- Teachers return from breaks feeling rejuvenated.
- During intersessions, teachers have the opportunity to observe at other schools.

Negative effects on teachers:

- Teachers cannot go to UT or other universities in the summer for graduate work.
- The PDA does not offer as many courses of interest to elementary teachers at times when year-round teachers can attend.

Negative effects on students

- The invitation to attend intersessions is not extended to all students.
- Not all targeted students attend intersessions.

MIDDLE SCHOOL TEACHER SURVEY

The principal of Webb Middle School, aware of the differing opinions about the year-round calendar at Webb, gave all the teachers at his school an opportunity to provide input. Twenty-three surveys were returned by Webb teachers. Survey results are presented in Table 2 and are summarized in the following paragraphs.

Teaching Strategies

When asked if their teaching strategies had changed with the implementation of the year-round calendar, 63% of the middle school teachers who responded indicated agreement. This response is similar to that reported for elementary teachers, who reported a 64% agreement rate with the same statement.

Professional Development

Sixty-seven percent of the Webb teachers indicated that they are unable to take advantage of professional development opportunities. This contrasts with the elementary teachers' response of 43% who feel that they are unable to take advantage of similar opportunities. The middle school teachers expressed the same reasons for dissatisfaction as elementary teachers did--PDA courses are not always offered when they can attend (the Austin Writing Project training takes place in June, for example), and college classes are difficult to arrange in the summer.

Support for Year-Round Schools

Middle school teachers did not indicate as much support for the year-round calendar from parents and the community as the elementary teachers reported. Sixty-one percent of the Webb teachers responded that parents are supportive of intersession activities, and 51% indicated that the community is supportive of intersession. One additional indicator of parental support might be derived from the percentage of targeted students who actually attend intersessions. Forty-five percent of Webb teachers vs. 81% of elementary teachers believe that 75% or more of the targeted students attend intersession classes. Thirty-nine percent of the Webb teachers believe that less than 50% of the targeted students attend intersession.

Regarding district support of the year-round calendar, 92% of the Webb Middle School teachers who responded to the survey do not believe that district programs and activities are coordinated with the year-round calendar. This percentage is much higher than the elementary teachers' response (52%). The issue of coordination of programs and activities is of particular importance at Webb because their students compete with students from other middle schools in UIL academic, athletic, and fine arts activities.

Table 2: 1997 Year-Round Teacher Survey
Webb Middle School (N-23)

SURVEY ITEM	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. **My teaching strategies have changed as a result of teaching at a year-round school.**	6 (27%)	8 (36%)	3 (14%)	4 (18%)	1 (5%)
2. **The year-round calendar allows me to take advantage of professional development opportunities (e.g., district- or state-sponsored training, college course work).**	1 (5%)	5 (24%)	1 (5%)	6 (29%)	8 (38%)
3. **District programs and activities are coordinated with the year-round calendar.**	0 (0%)	1 (4%)	1 (4%)	5 (22%)	16 (70%)
4. **Parents are supportive of intersession activities.**	3 (13%)	11 (48%)	3 (13%)	3 (13%)	3 (13%)
5. **Community members are supportive of intersession activities.**	3 (13%)	8 (38%)	7 (30%)	2 (9%)	3 (13%)
6. **What percentage of targeted students participates in intersession activities?**					
More than 90% = 1 (6%)					
75-90% = 7 (39%)					
50-74% = 3 (17%)					
Less than 50% = 7 (39%)					

Note. The values represent the number of responses to each item option. The numbers in parentheses represent the percent of teachers who responded to each item option.

Adaptations to the Curriculum

Webb teachers were asked if any adaptations to the standard curriculum were made at their campus in response to the year-round calendar. While several teachers reported that there have been no major changes, other teachers noted that adaptations have been made. Comments concerning adaptations to the standard curriculum included the following:

- Intersessions have provided opportunities to supplement the standard curriculum.
- Teachers are able to prepare more in-depth and comprehensive lessons.
- Teachers are able to spend more one-on-one time with students.
- Intersession classes have provided early intervention for "borderline" students.
- There has been more time for focusing on TAAS objectives.

Effects of the Year-Round Calendar

When asked what changes and benefits resulted from the implementation of the year-round calendar, the teachers' opinions were mixed. They reported both strong support for and strong

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opposition against the year-round calendar for middle school students at Webb. The teachers' comments included the following:

Benefits for Students

- Students exhibit an increased retention of material.
- When students return to school, re-teaching is minimized.
- Shorter breaks provide students more continuity in the school year.
- There is more time for working on TAAS objectives and, as a result, TAAS scores increased after only one year of the year-round calendar, according to some teachers.
- Students typically return from intersessions rested and refreshed.

Benefits for teachers

- Teachers are less stressed at the end of a year-round school year because the pace is consistent, and there is more time for planning throughout the year.
- During the intersessions, teachers have time for "intense and uninterrupted planning".
- Teachers can rest and re-energize during the breaks.
- The year-round calendar allows teachers to intervene more quickly with special needs students.
- Teachers can increase their income by teaching during the intersessions.

Negative effects on students and parents

- Webb is the only year-round middle school in the district and, as a result, there are many scheduling conflicts, including extra-curricular activities and UIL competitions.
- Students must be re-familiarized with classroom procedures and re-taught academic material after the breaks.
- Students who transfer to non-year-round schools might not be able to meet the attendance requirements for promotion.
- Many parents must pay for additional childcare when they have traditionally relied on older children to care for younger ones during school vacations.

Negative effects on teachers

- Teachers' opportunities for professional development and additional college coursework decrease as a result of the year-round calendar.
- Teachers often must pay for childcare for their children who attend traditional-calendar schools.
- Teachers sometimes cannot take vacations with their families because their spouses and children have different schedules.
- Teachers sometimes miss out on lucrative summer jobs because they are still teaching in June.

SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF INTERVIEWS

School staff who provide support for teachers and students were interviewed as part of the year-round school evaluation. Included whenever possible in this data collection effort were secretaries, counselors, custodians, and cafeteria workers; the support staff was not available to be interviewed at every school. The questions asked involved the changes that have occurred in the staff member's job because of the year-round calendar.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF

Counselors

Five of the six elementary counselors interviewed at year-round schools were part of the school's staff when the year-round calendar was adopted. Most of the changes for counselors relate to deadlines set by central administration that do not take the year-round calendar into consideration. Forms and reports are due before the end of classes at year-round schools. Some of the counselors reported making self-imposed deadlines three times per year, one before each break.

Counselors do not officially work during the intersession, but several counselors reported working on their own time to keep up with the paperwork that continues to arrive while year-round schools are closed. The counselors reported positive attitudes toward the year-round calendar now, although some of the counselors said that they did not like it at first. One of the disadvantages of the calendar for them is that counselors cannot attend the PDA counseling institute in June because of the year-round schedule.

Many of the counselors said that the intersession breaks come at 'the right time." One counselor said that she feels that *"the year-round calendar is better for behavior problems."* Two of the counselors reported that students who are *"hanging around the school in June"* are asked to volunteer at the school. In summary, the elementary counselors believe that the year-round calendar is beneficial to students for the following reasons:

- Low-socioeconomic students benefit from shorter breaks and intersession activities.
- Year-round education is beneficial to students who don't have a lot of summer activities in which to participate.
- The students like to be in school and most of the parents prefer them to be there.
- There is more time to interact with and help students.
- Counselors are able to keep in closer contact with students and their families because of shorter breaks.

Secretaries

Of the eight secretaries interviewed, five were part of the school's staff when the year-round calendar was first adopted. Seven of the eight secretaries interviewed said that they have more paperwork to do because of the year-round calendar. A large amount of paperwork is required to prepare for intersessions (e.g., ordering supplies and preparing payrolls), according to one secretary. Two of the secretaries suggested that funds should be set aside to pay for support staff to work during the intersessions. Several of the secretaries said they do some work at the school over the break, even though they do not receive compensation.

The concerns of secretaries relate to deadlines (e.g., book orders, grant applications) that occur while year-round schools are on break. A disadvantage for the secretaries is that year-round schools are always open; "*there is no closure, especially in terms of bookkeeping,*" according to one secretary.

Custodians

Of the six custodians interviewed, three were part of the school's staff when the year-round calendar was first adopted. Because custodians are 12-month employees, there are not as many differences in their schedules as a result of the year-round calendar as there might be for other members of the support staff. Nevertheless, there are some changes to the workload of custodians at year-round schools. All of the head custodians said that, rather than doing one big cleaning job in the summer, sections of the buildings have to be cleaned every three months. Because there are children in the schools during the intersessions, custodians must coordinate their cleaning schedules with the teachers during the break.

The custodians all reported that they like the year-round calendar. The disadvantages mentioned were considered to be inconveniences, but not major difficulties. Those disadvantages included scheduling vacations for custodians, getting the entire building clean during the breaks, and ordering supplies at the end of the regular-calendar school, a deadline which occurs six weeks before year-round school is out.

Cafeteria Managers

Of the nine cafeteria managers interviewed, five were part of the school's staff when the year-round calendar was first adopted. Although the cafeteria managers all reported that they were satisfied with the year-round calendar, one manager commented that, initially, adjustments had to be made in terms of scheduling deliveries and storing food.

Many of the managers believe that the changes as a result of the year-round calendar have been positive. Overall attendance of employees has improved with the year-round calendar, said some of the managers. Cafeteria managers reported several benefits, including the following:

- During intersessions, cafeteria workers can substitute at regular-calendar schools to earn extra money.
- Because the workload is lighter during intersessions, cafeteria managers have time to work with new employees to improve their skills.

There are some inconveniences associated with the year-round calendar as well. Some of the inconveniences noted included the following:

- Cafeteria workers are paid at summer rates, rather than their regular salary, during intersessions.
- District deliveries are scheduled for days that school is not in session, so more food must be ordered in advance of the intersession breaks.

WEBB MIDDLE SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF

Counselor

The counselor of Webb Middle School has been part of the school's staff for five years. The counselor reported that his workload and salary are unchanged as a result of the year-round calendar because he doesn't work during the intersessions. According to the counselor, who served as chairperson of the year-round cadre, the year-round schedule works well for him because his wife teaches at another year-round school in the district. The year-round schedule is also beneficial to students, according to the counselor, because it allows time for special instruction for students who are in need of extra help.

There are also drawbacks to the year-round calendar, according to the counselor. TAAS testing, which at Webb follows the traditional school calendar, presents problems for year-round schools, and there are scheduling difficulties for UIL and athletic events with the year-round calendar. In addition, there are attendance problems associated with the year-round calendar; the counselor often has to call absent students.

Secretary

The secretary of Webb Middle School was part of the school's staff when the year-round calendar was adopted, and she does not like the new schedule for several reasons. First, on the year-round schedule, the secretary reports that she does more work for the same amount of money. In addition, students from other schools visit in June, which creates problems for the secretary. Finally, according to the secretary, absences are high after intersessions, especially during the first two weeks of June.

Custodian

The custodian of Webb Middle School was part of the school's staff when the year-round calendar was adopted. The year-round schedule is preferable, according to the custodian, because of the two additional months of work. The custodian reported that she liked the current schedule, and she did not notice any changes in her job as a result of the adoption of the year-round calendar.

YEAR-ROUND PARENT SURVEY

Parents of students who attend year-round schools were asked to complete a survey indicating their likes and dislikes about the year-round calendar. Of the 347 surveys assumed to have reached the parents through the mail, 81 were completed and returned. Because of the low response rate (23%), the findings from the parent survey should be interpreted with caution.

The questions asked of parents in this survey were designed to determine if parents like the year-round calendar, if the family has adjusted to the calendar, and if year-round education has positively affected their child. The results of the parent surveys for all schools are presented in Table 3. A large percentage of parents (76%) reported that their families like the year-round school calendar; only fifteen percent of parents reported that they dislike the calendar. Seventy-four percent of parents who responded to the question felt that the year-round calendar has had a positive impact on their child's education.

One of the disadvantages of the year-round calendar reported by principals most often was the inconvenience of childcare for families on the non-traditional school calendar. However, slightly more than half of the parents (54%) reported that childcare options are readily available for their child during the intersessions. Less than one-third of the parents (29%) disagreed that childcare options are readily available during the breaks; it is not known what percentage of these parents would also have difficulty finding childcare during a regular-calendar school year.

Principals stated that another disadvantage of the year-round calendar for families is the inconvenience of being on two school schedules if another child in the household is on a traditional school calendar. There is a possibility that the year-round calendar could disrupt vacations or other family activities. However, 70% of the parents who responded to the survey agreed that their family schedule has adapted well to the year-round calendar.

Intersession instruction is an important component of the year-round education approach used in AISD. Fifty-nine percent of the parents who responded to the survey have a child who has participated in intersession activities. Of this group of parents, 74% agreed that the intersessions have been beneficial to their child's academic progress.

Table 3: 1997 Year-Round Parent Survey (N=81)

SURVEY ITEM	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. **My family likes the year-round school calendar.**	40 (50%)	21 (26%)	7 (9%)	3 (4%)	9 (11%)
2. **The year-round school calendar has had a positive impact on my child's education.**	32 (41%)	26 (33%)	13 (15%)	2 (3%)	6 (8%)
3. **Day care options are readily available for my children during the three-week breaks in November, March, and July.**	16 (21%)	25 (33%)	12 (16%)	12 (16%)	10 (13%)
4. **Our family schedule (e.g., vacation, activities) has adapted well to the year-round calendar.**	24 (30%)	32 (40%)	9 (11%)	6 (7%)	10 (12%)
5. **My child has attended intersession.** **Yes = 45 (59%) No = 31 (41%)**					
6. **Intersessions have been beneficial to my child's academic progress.**	26 (48%)	14 (26%)	8 (15%)	2 (4%)	4 (7%)

Note. The values represent the number of responses to each item option. The total number of responses to any one item varies, as not all parents responded to each question. The numbers in parentheses represent the percent of parents who responded to each item option.

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The parents who responded to the survey indicated that they are involved at their child's school by volunteering in the classroom and at special events, attending parent meetings and conferences, mentoring other children, and communicating with teachers about their child's progress. In addition, two open-ended questions were designed to determine how the year-round calendar has affected families. Parents were asked to describe what they like and what they do not like about the year-round program. The responses are reported in the following paragraphs.

What do you like about the year-round school program?

Overall, parents are very positive about the year-round calendar. However, seven of the parents who responded to the survey said that they liked *"nothing"* about the year-round calendar. Comments made by parents in response to the question, *"What do you like about the year-round school program?"* are listed below. The numbers in parentheses indicate how many parents responded in a similar fashion.

- Children retain more of what they have learned than they would have retained over a long summer break. (19)
- Parents prefer the shorter periodic breaks to the long summer break. (7)
- Children are more interested in school and learning with the year-round calendar. (6)
- Neighborhood children are kept busy and *"out of trouble."* (6)
- With the shorter breaks between sessions, students find it easier to readjust to a learning mind-set when they return to school. (5)
- The continuity of year-round learning is good for students. (5)
- Families can take vacations when others are not on vacation. (5)

What don't you like about the year-round school program?

Parents were also given an opportunity to indicate what they do not like about the year-round calendar. Twenty-seven parents who responded to the survey had nothing negative to say about the calendar. Specific comments made by parents in response to the question, *"What don't you like about the year-round school program?"* are listed below. The numbers in parentheses indicate how many parents responded in a similar fashion.

- Other children and friends are on the traditional school calendar, which makes it difficult for families to plan vacations and activities. (13)
- Affordable childcare is not always available to parents during the breaks. (11)
- Children not invited to attend academic classes would enjoy more school-sponsored activities (e.g., field trips and special classes) during the breaks. (5)
- All AISD children should be on the same school schedule. (5)

SUMMARY

Although parents reported that some inconveniences have arisen as a result of the year-round calendar, responses to this parent survey indicate that 76% of the parents who replied like the year-round school program. However, the overall response rate is too small to generalize these conclusions to all parents of students who attend year-round schools.

Comments made by parents about the benefits of the year-round calendar were similar to the benefits listed by the teachers and principals at the year-round schools. Academic benefits for children listed by several parents who responded to the survey included: a greater retention of material learned; more interest in school and in learning; better continuity through year-round learning; needed rest for children; and an eagerness to return to school. Families can also benefit. Some of the benefits listed by parents include the flexibility of planning family vacations throughout the year, and a preference for shorter breaks during the year instead of the long summer vacation.

Parents also indicated which aspects of the year-round calendar that they do not like. None of the negative comments concerned the education of their children, however. All of the problems reported by parents concerned the difficulties in scheduling family vacations and childcare. Many of the parents thought that the year-round elementary schools should feed into middle schools that are also on the year-round calendar, while other parents commented that all schools in the district should be on the same calendar.

It is difficult to say that this survey correctly reflects the feelings of all of the parents of children who attend a year-round school because there was such a low response rate. It is interesting to note, however, that the parents who responded positively to the year-round calendar felt that their children are benefiting academically from the calendar. Conversely, the parents who responded negatively to the year-round calendar were most concerned with the inconveniences resulting from scheduling difficulties.

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF SURVEY

District administrators directly involved with the year-round schools (i.e., area superintendents and instructional coordinators) were asked to complete a survey about the year-round schools. Sixteen surveys were sent to district administrators, and seven surveys were returned, for a response rate of 44%.

Four (57%) of the seven district administrative staff who completed the survey disagreed that there is a standard curriculum for intersessions at the year-round schools. When asked about the use of innovative strategies during the intersessions, 57% of the staff that responded to the survey felt that such strategies were employed.

The majority (57%) of district staff who responded to the survey indicated that the district adequately supports the special needs of year-round schools, although 29% were unsure whether this is true. While only five of the seven surveys included a response to questions concerning parent and community involvement, the majority (57%) of district staff who responded to these survey items agreed that the parent and community involvement at year-round schools is about equal to that found at the regular-calendar schools.

In general, district staff were unsure about the number of transfer requests from year-round schools compared with regular-calendar schools. Seventy-one percent of those responding were "not sure" if year-round teachers request transfers within the district more frequently than regular-calendar teachers do. When asked about staff development opportunities for year-round teachers, 71% of the district staff who responded indicated that teachers at year-round schools do not have the same opportunities for staff development that are available to teachers at regular-calendar schools. The most likely reason for this is that many of the staff development opportunities offered by the district occur in June. Table 4 shows the response rates to the district staff survey.

ADVANTAGES/DISADVANTAGES OF THE YEAR-ROUND CALENDAR

District administrative staff were asked to list the advantages or benefits of the year-round calendar. Many of the benefits cited by district staff were the same as the ones reported by teachers and principals. Comments made by the district administrative staff included the following:

- *The needs of the children are being met.*
- *Students retain more of what they have learned.*
- *Students have better focus because of shorter breaks spread throughout the year.*
- *Students exhibit more consistent academic performance.*
- *Intersessions provide much needed time to reinforce and support students.*
- *Periodic breaks probably reduce stress for teachers and students as opposed to the traditional calendar of "nine months on, three months off."*
- *Teachers remain enthusiastic.*

Table 4: 1997 Year-Round Schools District Staff Survey (N=7)

SURVEY ITEM	Strongly Agree	Agree	Not Sure	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1. **There is a standard curriculum used for intersessions at year-round schools.**	1 (14%)	1 (14%)	1 (14%)	3 (43%)	1 (14%)
2. **Year-round schools use innovative strategies during intersessions.**	1 (14%)	3 (43%)	2 (29%)	1 (14%)	0 (0%)
3. **Teachers at year-round schools have the same opportunities for staff development that are available for teachers at regular-calendar schools.**	0 (0%)	2 (29%)	0 (0%)	5 (71%)	0 (0%)
4. **Year-round teachers request transfers to other schools within the District more frequently than do teachers at regular-calendar schools.**	1 (14%)	0 (0%)	5 (71%)	1 (14%)	0 (0%)
5. **The special needs (e.g., transportation, custodians, food services, utilities) of year-round schools are adequately supported by the district.**	1 (14%)	3 (43%)	2 (29%)	1 (14%)	0 (0%)
6. **How would you characterize parental involvement at year-round schools as compared with regular-calendar schools?**					
Parents are more involved = 1 (20%)					
Parents are as involved = 3 (60%)					
Parents are less involved = 1 (20%)					
7. **How would you characterize community involvement at year-round schools as compared with regular-calendar schools?**					
Community members are more involved 1 (20%)					
Community members are as involved 3 (43%)					
Community members are less involved 1 (20%)					

Note. The values represent the number of responses to each item option. The numbers in parentheses represent the percent of district staff who responded to each item option.

When asked about the disadvantages of the year-round calendar, district staff who responded to the survey listed many inconveniences. In general, their comments related to scheduling of events and meetings, rather than with student learning.

- *Parents with children on different calendars are inconvenienced.*
- *District-wide, regional, area, and state activities often conflict with the year-round calendar.*
- *It is difficult to schedule planning meetings and staff development with two different calendars.*
- *Staff development opportunities are limited in the summer for year-round teachers and staff.*
- *Itinerant teachers on year-round campuses who also are assigned to traditional calendar schools are, in effect, on the job continuously without compensation.*

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- *The year-round calendar severely limits options for the scheduling of districtwide fine arts activities.*
- *Not all students have access to transportation to intersession activities.*
- *AISD should be striving to assure uniformity in scheduling among schools.*
- *There is no research that shows that students perform better as a result of the year-round calendar.*

The following comments are specific to Webb Middle School:

- *The schools are out of schedule with the other schools. The Webb Middle School teachers have had a difficult time keeping up with the middle school initiatives.*
- *The disadvantages of having Webb on year-round are huge for the choral music program. The UIL and All-State competition calendars are not sensitive to this issue.*

SUMMARY

The district personnel who responded to the survey recognize benefits of the year-round calendar for students who get additional instruction during the intersessions. However, they indicated many inconveniences to the district, especially at the middle school level. In particular, district staff reported that scheduling activities to fit both calendars presents a challenge.

SUMMARY OF YEAR-ROUND PRINCIPAL INTERVIEWS

ELEMENTARY PRINCIPALS

Improved student achievement is the primary goal of the single-track year-round school calendar used by AISD. The program is designed to provide additional days of instruction during the intersessions in November, March, and, in some cases, July. The intersessions provide opportunities for enrichment projects such as study trips, and mixed-age and thematic activities.

All of the AISD elementary year-round principals expressed very positive attitudes about year-round education. The elementary principals believe that there are many benefits of the year-round calendar for students, teachers, and parents. The comments made by the principals of year-round schools during visits to each campus are included with the individual school reports. A summary of those comments will be included in this section.

Benefits to Students

According to the principals, students attending the year-round schools benefit from the short breaks throughout the year. Principals report that students retain more information, and less re-teaching and reviewing is required with the year-round calendar.

Teachers use intersessions as a time to target students in need of extra work on TAAS objectives. Also, teachers typically send packets of work home with all students during the breaks to keep the students academically active. Some principals reported that the TAAS scores have improved at their schools since the implementation of the year-round calendar.

Because all of the year-round schools in AISD are Title I campuses, the majority of the students following a year-round calendar in the district are from low-income families. Several principals said that the year-round schedule provides opportunities to make constructive activities available for low-income students who might not be able to attend summer camps and programs.

Benefits to Parents

Because parents have to make adjustments in their schedules that affect the entire family to accommodate the year-round calendar, they do not benefit as directly as students or teachers. Childcare can be a problem for families when there are other siblings attending regular-calendar schools. Year-round schools have met this challenge by providing childcare at the school both during intersessions and after school, according to many of the principals.

One possible benefit to parents might be that childcare costs are spread evenly throughout the year and, consequently, it is not necessary to arrange for long-term childcare. In a related issue, many principals indicated that the parents at their campuses appreciate having a place for their children in June.

Parents also have the opportunity to take the family on trips during less frequently traveled times of the year. However, if the year-round calendar does not work for the parents, a transfer to a regular-calendar school can be arranged, principals say.

Benefits to Teachers

Principals report that teachers return from the intersessions refreshed, re-energized, and relaxed. Teachers can use their breaks to travel, to plan for the upcoming session, to visit other schools, or to participate in staff development. Many teachers choose to teach during the intersession to earn additional money and to try new instructional strategies, according to principals. An added benefit to teachers with children of their own is that they can visit and volunteer at their child's regular-calendar school during the intersession breaks.

Disadvantages for Students

While there are disadvantages to the year-round calendar for students, parents, and teachers, there are only a few disadvantages of the year-round calendar that directly relate to students, according to principals. At one of the year-round schools that has grade 6 students, the band and orchestra teacher is not available in June because the music teachers work on a regular-calendar contract. Although most opportunities for children that are available in June are also available in July, there are some scheduling conflicts with summer camps and family trips in June, according to the principals. Also, some families go to Mexico at the end of the November intersession and do not return until after the winter break. However, one school reported that the teachers send work packets along with the children going to Mexico, if possible.

Disadvantages for Parents

Finding childcare at non-traditional times (November and March) is the disadvantage for parents mentioned most often by principals at year-round schools. If older siblings are in regular-calendar schools, it is difficult for some parents to obtain childcare. However, all of the principals said that childcare is offered at their campuses during the intersessions at a nominal fee.

Principals also commented that it is sometimes hard for parents of children on different school calendars to make plans for family vacations and other activities. It was noted, however, that parents could ask for a transfer of their child to a regular-calendar school if necessary.

Disadvantages for Teachers

The disadvantages of the year-round calendar for teachers are particularly noticed in the professional development and higher education areas, according to the principals. Because the year-round calendar extends into June, it is difficult for teachers to attend summer school at a university to pursue advanced degrees.

Teachers at year-round schools are also limited in the professional development in which they can participate. According to the principals, the AISD Professional Development Academy has added more courses in July to accommodate year-round teachers, an indication that the district is addressing this situation.

It can also be difficult for teachers who have children at regular-calendar schools to teach at a year-round school. Some of the principals said that teachers have turned this into an opportunity for good parenting by visiting and volunteering at their child's school during the intersession breaks.

Disadvantages for Principals

The year-round principals do not get much time off because of the alternative school calendar. In addition to the inclusion of extra instructional days during the intersession, principals must attend all of the district meetings, even when year-round schools are on break.

The year-round calendar also results in more work for principals. The principal has to be the administrator for the regular session while being part of the planning for the intersessions. In addition, deadlines for grant applications, purchase orders, and Campus Improvement Plans sometimes conflict with the year-round calendar.

Factors Affecting Implementation

There are many factors that affect the implementation of the year-round calendar, according to the principals. Special arrangements must be made for the intersessions and for June, such as facility maintenance, transportation of students, food service, and childcare. Also, principals feel that the year-round campuses lack a sense of support from central administration. For example, deadlines sometimes occur during the break. It seems that central administration *"forgets that year-round schools are on a different schedule,"* the principals note.

There are additional expenses for running the year-round schools that are not paid by the district, according to principals. Most notably, principals have to ensure that they have adequate funding for the intersessions. These funds have been secured from the following sources: Optional Extended Year Grant (state); ExceL Grants (district); bilingual funds (federal); Title I funds (federal); Year-Round Schools Initiative (state); and other grants.

Other difficulties that year-round schools must work around include the timing of some districtwide and statewide competitions. According to the principals, some of the activities that presented the greatest challenges for the year-round schools include the Music Memory Contest scheduled in April, and the Science Fair, which is held immediately after the March intersession break. In addition, it was noted that the Reading Recovery program faces possible interruptions to its prescribed activities because of the intersession breaks.

Intersessions

Overall, students, parents, and teachers are very pleased with the year-round calendar, according to year-round principals. Principals report that there are more students who want to attend intersessions and more teachers who want to teach during these times than the schools can accommodate. Parents also seem eager for their children to attend the intersessions.

Additional support is provided by community organizations that have worked with some of the year-round campuses to provide recreational activities during the intersession, particularly the Austin Parks and Recreation Department and the Austin Lyric Opera. District staff have been supportive as well, but to a lesser degree in June, according to one principal.

Teacher and Student Transfers

The enrollment at the year-round campuses has stayed constant or increased as a result of the year-round calendar, according the principals. In fact, most of the schools have had to establish an enrollment cutoff date to address the specific issue of parents who want to transfer

their children from a regular-calendar school into a year-round school in May, only to transfer out at the end of June.

A small number of teachers requested transfers out of the year-round schools when the program was first implemented because their children attended traditional calendar schools. Conversely, teacher requests to transfer into the year-round schools have increased since the implementation of the year-round school program, principals report.

Advice to Principals

Year-round school principals had suggestions for other principals who want to implement the year-round program. Principals offered the following advice:

- *"Do it for the kids; it's hard work the first year, but worth it!"*
- *Start by visiting year-round schools and interviewing their teachers and staff.*
- *Get support from faculty and staff before going to parents and the community. Then, seek parent and community support.*
- *Communicate fully and often with parents.*
- *Base student-selection criteria [for intersessions] on the needs of the students and make sure that their parents understand the criteria used in the selection process.*
- *Be prepared for complex budget issues.*
- *Monitor the budget to ensure that you are meeting the needs of as many children as possible.*
- *Ensure adequate funding for intersessions by seeking outside funding sources.*
- *Be prepared to work during breaks because many deadlines (based on the traditional-school calendar) occur during this time.*
- *Question deadlines set for traditional-calendar schools, and encourage administrators to consider the year-round calendar when setting the deadlines.*
- *Give copies of the year-round calendar to district and city police so that year-round students will not be mistaken for truants during intersession.*

MIDDLE SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

While elementary year-round principals are overwhelmingly in favor of the year-round calendar, this is not the case for the only AISD year-round middle school principal. The year-round calendar has been a divisive issue at Webb, according the principal. Core academic teachers are in favor of the year-round calendar because of additional instruction time for students who need it, but the special area teachers are opposed to the year-round calendar for middle school because of the conflicts with districtwide and statewide competitions. While the principal noted that there have not been any teacher transfer requests, the issue remains a disruptive one for his staff.

Benefits

The principal of Webb says that students who are behind in their classes can attend intersessions and benefit from smaller classes and more individualized attention. Students and teachers benefit from the periodic breaks during the year. Also, students and teachers involved with intersession activities are very supportive of the program. Parents appreciate more learning

time for their children. However, the principal commented that the year-round calendar does not particularly benefit parents of middle school students.

Disadvantages

Because Webb is the only middle school that is on the year-round calendar, some special situations arise for this campus. The principal says that the year-round calendar is out of alignment with the district calendar. He also comments that *"year-round education is not a district goal or priority so there is no support (other than financial) from central administration."* Further, the Alternative Learning Center (ALC), an alternative education site for discipline referrals, is closed in June, leaving the middle school without that source of support.

Factors Affecting Implementation

There is no allowance made for the year-round calendar in planning by central administration and the statewide University Interscholastic League (UIL) committee, according to the Webb principal. Middle school students participate in the statewide UIL in academics, fine arts, and athletics. Some of the districtwide and statewide competitions are scheduled to occur immediately after the March intersession. These competitions include districtwide activities such as Music Memory, Art Fair, and the Science Fair; and statewide UIL band and orchestra competition. The special area teachers (music, art, P.E.) often work with students outside of school on their own time during these breaks so that their students will be prepared for the competition.

Webb students (especially grade 8) cannot participate in some of the citywide summer programs from which they could benefit. These programs include summer school, Austin Interfaith Job Fair, City of Austin lifeguard program, and JTPA. Grade 8 students also miss out on summer band camps at the high school they will attend if the camp is held in June.

Problems can also arise when a student transfers late in the school year. Grade 8 students must complete a specific number of instructional days to matriculate to high school. While AISD feeder high schools are cooperative, out-of-district transfers can present a problem. For example, the principal described a recent situation in which an eighth grade student transferred to another district in May, and the student was not promoted to the ninth grade due to a lack of attendance days.

Advice to Principals

The factors affecting the implementation of the year-round calendar are more complicated at the middle school level than at the elementary level. When asked what advice he would give to other middle school principals who are considering implementation of the year-round calendar at their campuses, the principal said, *"Don't do it!"* He says that the commitment was made to go to year-round education and the majority of the staff supports the decision, but *"nonalignment with the district calendar is a big problem."* The district will need to support alternative calendars by taking the year-round calendar into consideration when scheduling activities, according to the principal. Also, UIL competition would need to be addressed by the state.

INTERSESSIONS

INTERSESSIONS

Year-round schools offered instructional activities during the November 1996 and March 1997 intersessions. Sanchez also held a July intersession. Most schools reported offering all-day sessions for one week during the breaks. The principals of year-round schools reported that attendance was good and enthusiasm was high during the intersessions. Principals also indicated that the schools must secure funds for intersessions outside of the regular budget.

ATTENDANCE

Year-round schools were asked to report the names and student identification numbers of students who attended November and March intersessions in 1996-97. Of the total number reported, 914 students attended both intersessions and are included in the count for each. The November 1996 intersession attendance was 1,679 (24% of the total enrollment of year-round schools). The March 1997 intersession attendance was 1,941 (28% of the total year-round school enrollment). The duplicated count for both intersessions was 3,620 for 1996-97.

Winn Elementary had the lowest attendance for the 1996-97 intersessions, while Widen (the largest of the year-round schools) had the highest attendance. Table 5 shows the number of students attending intersessions in 1996-97 by campus, along with the total year-round school enrollments.

Table 5: Number of Students Attending Intersessions by Campus and Year-Round School Enrollments, 1996-97

Year-Round Schools	Attendance November 1996	Attendance March 1997	Total Intersession Attendance*	1996-97 Year-Round School Enrollment
Allan	**95**	**199**	**294**	**517**
Barrington	135	187	322	802
Becker	86	137	223	358
Maplewood	94	110	204	387
Metz	128	127	255	504
Ortega	135	119	254	365
Sanchez	110	107	217	464
St. Elmo	137	147	284	461
Widen	355	288	643	991
Winn	87	86	173	548
Wooldridge	219	277	496	941
Webb MS	98	157	255	710
TOTAL	1,679	1,941	3,620	7,048

*Duplicated count (November and March)

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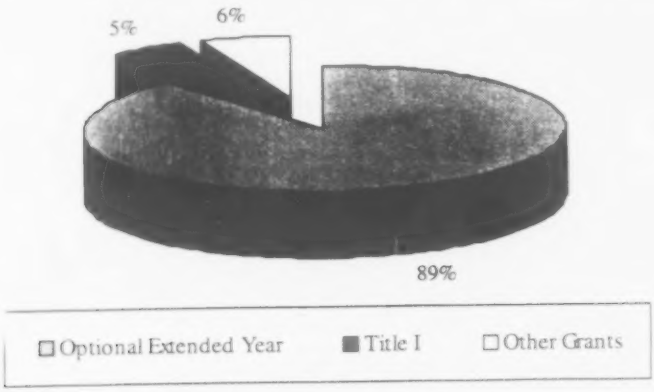
FUNDING SOURCES

Sources of 1996-97 intersession funding included Optional Extended Year grants (state), Year-Round Schools Incentive grants (state), Title I funds (federal), ExceL grants (district), Academics 2000 grants (state), bilingual funds (federal), and various other grants. During the 1996-97 school year, principals reported spending $548,657 for the March and November intersessions combined. Eighty-nine percent of this money, $487,043, was provided through the state-administered Optional Extended Year (OEY) grant. Figure 25 shows the percentage of Optional Extended Year, Title I, and other grant funds used to fund the 1996-97 intersessions.

Figure 25: Sources and Percentage of Funds Used for Intersessions



The primary purpose of the OEY grant is to reduce student retention. The total OEY funding for the 12 year-round campuses was $260,064 for 1996 and $250,936 for 1997. However, the 1996-97 school year was an atypical year for the OEY grant in that schools were allowed to carry over money from the 1996 calendar year to be used by August 1997. Consequently, the 1996-97 OEY amount of $548,657 is not a true picture of what is typically spent on intersession. For the 1997-98 school year, campuses will not receive their OEY funding before January 1998, and the monies will not be available for use until the spring or summer of 1998.

In addition to the OEY monies, each year-round school receives state Year-Round Schools (YRS) Incentive funds. These funds are provided to year-round schools across the state based on a per pupil allocation, and they may be used to support any part of year-round school expenses. The 1996-97 AISD total from YRS was $54,087, which was distributed across the 12 year-round campuses ranging from $3,094 at St. Elmo to $7,350 at Widen.

Year-round schools also used Title I funds to support intersessions. Bilingual funds were provided for Spanish-speaking students to attend intersessions. In addition, year-round schools apply for other grant monies that are available from various sources. Examples of the grants used in 1996-97 are the AISD ExceL grant, the state Academics 2000 grant, and the East Austin Youth Classic funds.

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Principals were asked to report the amount and type of funds used to support the 1996-97 intersessions. A total of $548,657 was spent on intersessions by the 12 year-round campuses. Table 6 shows the amount of funds spent by each campus to fund intersessions in 1996-97.

Table 6: AISD Intersession Funding Sources by School, 1996-97

School	# Students Served*	Optional Extended Yr.	Title I Funds	Other Sources	Total Funds
Allan	294	$ 47,000	0	0	$ 47,000
Barrington	322	50,533	0	0	50,533
Becker	223	26,000	0	0	26,000
Maplewood	204	23,515	15,723	0	39,238
Metz	255	38,831	0	0	38,831
Ortega	254	30,557	4,500	0	35,057
Sanchez	217	38,649	1,000	0	39,649
St. Elmo	284	11,173	0	16,560	27,733
Widen	643	74,536	0	2707	77,243
Winn	173	74,180	0	1,840	76,020
Wooldridge	496	56,656	0	3,170	59,826
Webb MS	255	15,404	6,556	9,567	31,527
TOTAL	3,620	$487,034.	$27,779	$33,844	$548,657

*Duplicated count (November and March)

Because the same students could attend both intersessions (the invitation to attend a given session was typically extended to those students most in need of additional assistance), a duplicated count is presented. This duplicated count was used to calculate a cost per attendee per intersession. When the amount of monies used to fund intersession in 1996-97 is divided by the total duplicated count, the cost across all campuses and across intersessions for each participant was $150.81.

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QUANTITATIVE ANALYSES

ACHIEVEMENT DATA ANALYSES

YEAR-ROUND SCHOOLS ACHIEVEMENT

For the 1996-97 school year, the year-round schools as a group were compared to Title I schools, a meaningful comparison as all year-round schools in AISD are also funded by Title I, and to district schools overall. TAAS scores used for these analyses are based on valid scores for all non-exempt students tested. Figures 26 and 27 present results of spring 1997 TAAS testing by average TLI and by average percent passing for these comparison groups. Information on 1997 TAAS testing for individual year-round schools by disaggregated group is included in Appendix B.

Overall, in terms of percent passing TAAS, students in year-round schools outperformed students in Title I schools in all three subject areas tested. The average TLI comparison indicates that, in the case of mathematics, the score for year-round schools approaches the district average (72.5 and 73.3, respectively). When average TAAS scores for disaggregated groups are examined, the performance of students in year-round schools compares very favorably to student performance in Title I schools in general and in the district as a whole.

Figure 26: 1997 TAAS Average Percent Passing by Subject for Year-Round Schools, Title I Schools, and the District (All Non-Exempt Students)

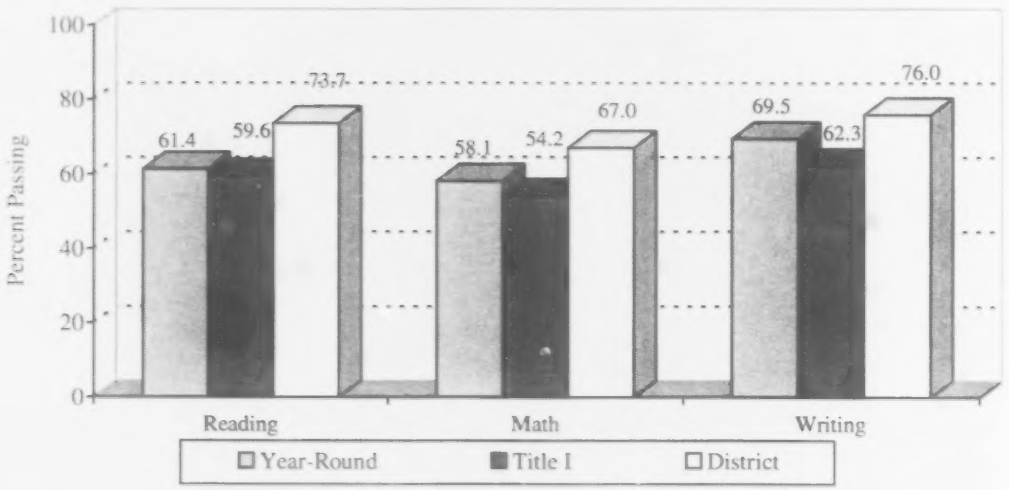
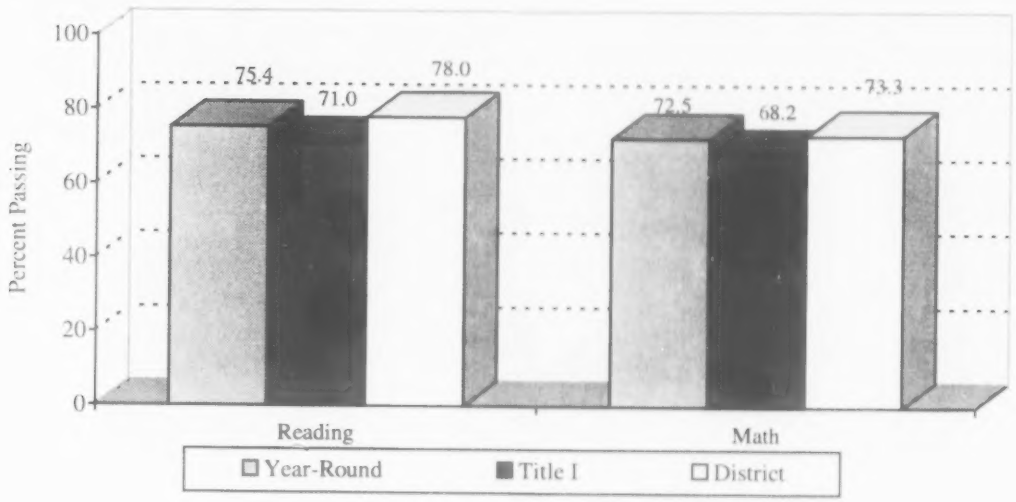


Figure 27: 1997 TAAS Average TLI by Subject for Year-Round Schools, Title I Schools, and the District (All Non-Exempt Students)



Figures 28-30 present the 1997 passing rate for TAAS reading, mathematics, and writing for year-round schools, Title I schools, and the district as a whole by disaggregated groups. Figures 31 and 32 present the average TLI for 1997 TAAS reading and mathematics. It can be seen from these figures that, during the 1996-97 school year, the year-round schools consistently outperformed Title I schools as a whole across all disaggregated groups. The only exception is average percent passing reading for white students, where the Title I schools had a slightly higher average score (78.0 vs. 77.9).

Economically disadvantaged, African American, and Hispanic students in year-round schools consistently achieved higher average TLI scores than did students in these disaggregated groups in the district as a whole. Further, the average percent passing in mathematics and writing for year-round students in these groups were higher in general than were scores for these student groups districtwide. Based on the achievement data from the 1996-97 school year, it can be concluded that economically disadvantaged, Hispanic, and African American students achieve higher average TAAS scores in year-round schools than do students from these disaggregated groups in Title I schools in general or in the district as a whole.

Figure 28: 1997 TAAS Reading Percent Passing for Year-Round Schools, Title I Schools, and the District by Disaggregated Groups (All Non-Exempt Students)

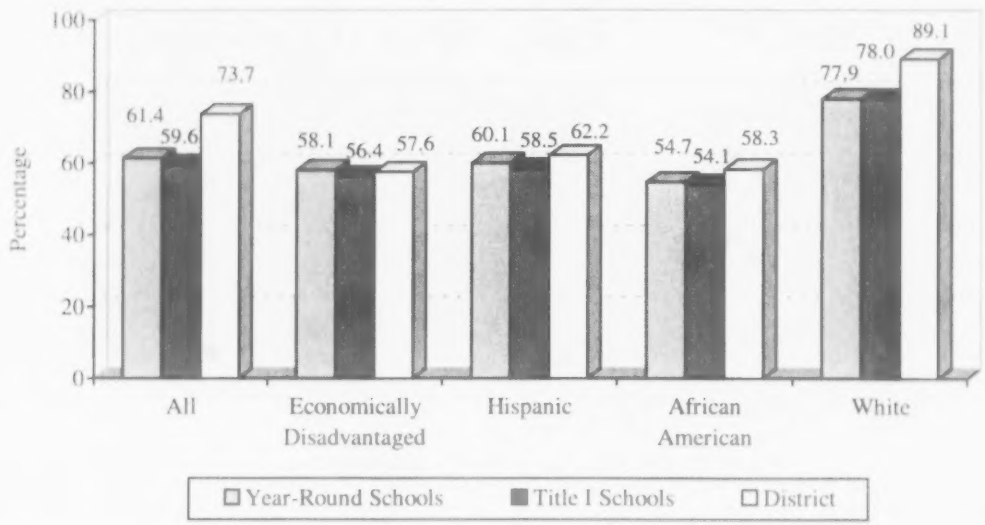


Figure 29: 1997 TAAS Mathematics Percent Passing for Year-Round Schools, Title I Schools, and the District by Disaggregated Groups (All Non-Exempt Students)

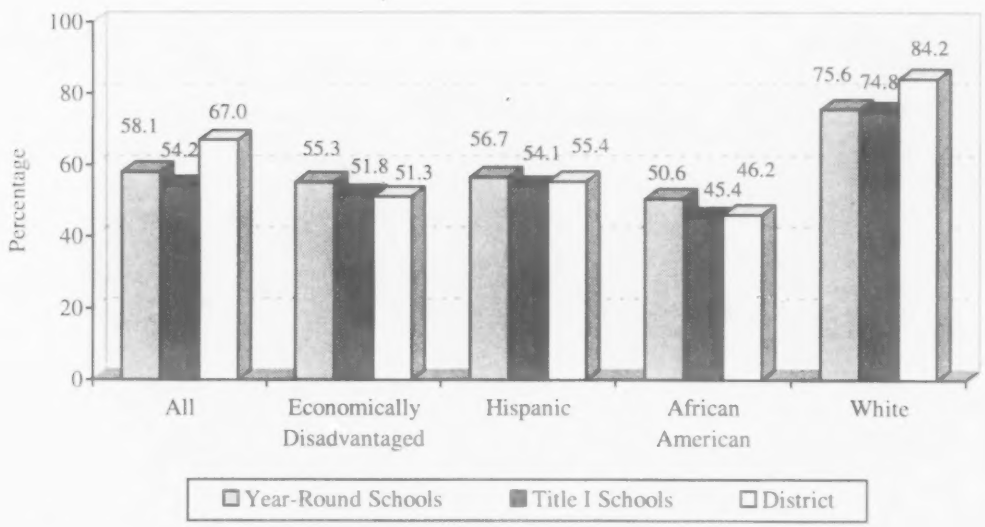


Figure 30: 1997 TAAS Writing Percent Passing for Year-Round Schools, Title I Schools, and the District by Disaggregated Groups (All Non-Exempt Students)

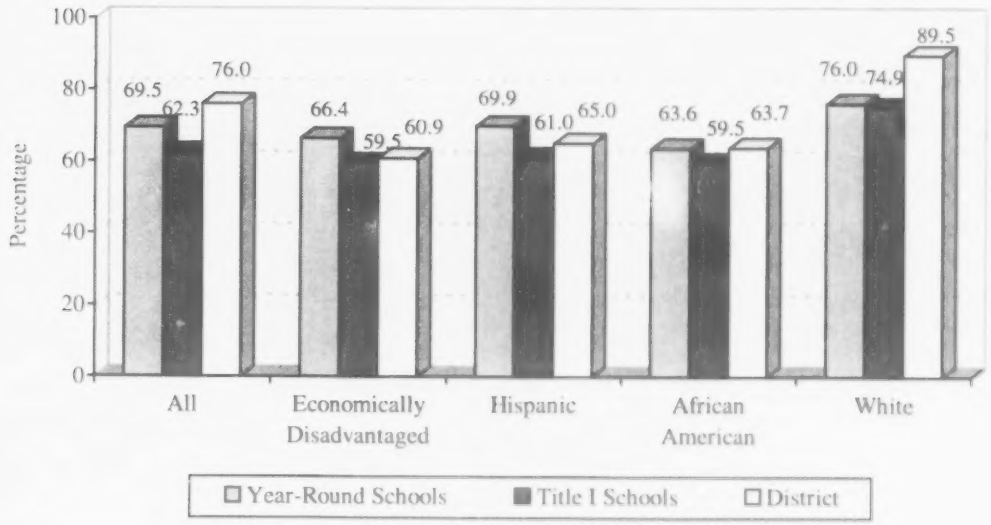


Figure 31: 1997 TAAS Reading Average TLI for Year-Round Schools, Title I Schools, and the District by Disaggregated Groups (All Non-Exempt Students)

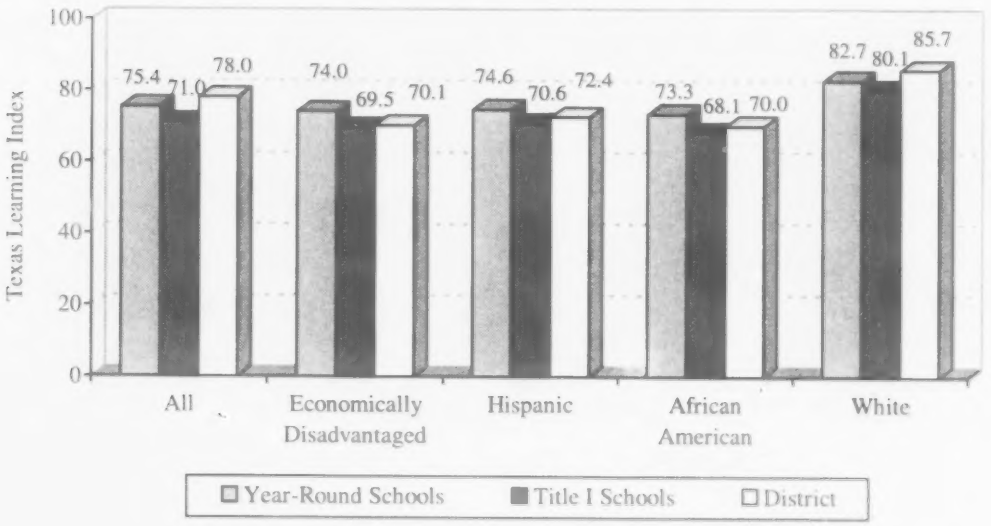
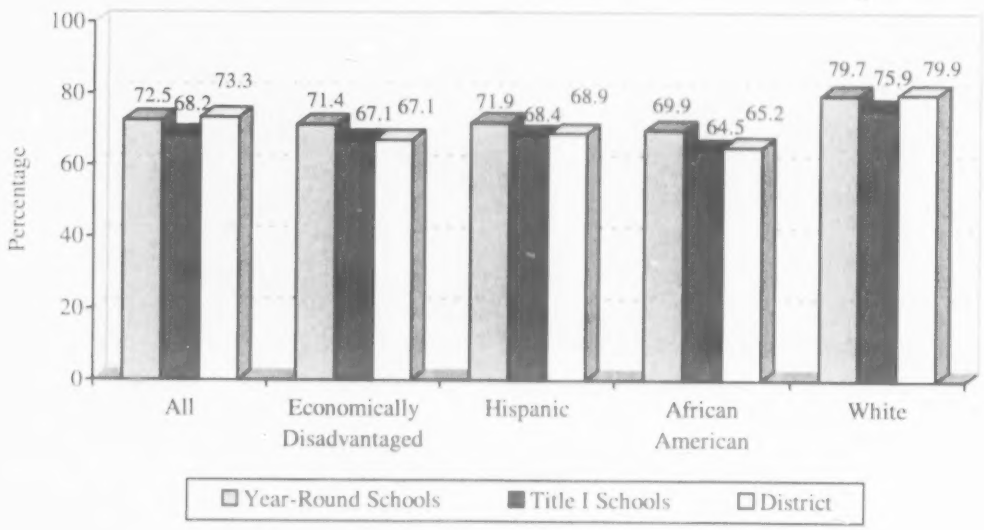


Figure 32: 1997 TAAS Mathematics Average TLI for Year-Round Schools, Title I Schools, and the District by Disaggregated Groups (All Non-Exempt Students)



PRE-K ACHIEVEMENT

Although TAAS scores are not available for students below third grade, it is still possible to investigate the effects of the year-round calendar on the academic achievement of students in earlier grades. This group of students is of particular interest because research indicates that at-risk students in the earliest grades have the potential to benefit the most from the additional instructional opportunities provided by the year-round calendar. Each year, AISD pre-K students are pre- and posttested with the *Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-Revised* (PPVT). In addition, Spanish-speaking limited English proficient (LEP) pre-K students are tested with the Spanish version of the same test, *Test de Vocabulario en Imagines Peabody* (TVIP). Results of these tests can be used to provide an indication of the effectiveness of the year-round calendar.

In 1996-97, year-round and regular-calendar pre-K students made similar gains on the PPVT and the TVIP from pre- to posttest, but year-round students had a higher average score at the end of the year because they started with a higher average pretest score. However, Spanish-speaking students began and ended the year with higher test scores, and made a greater gain from pre- to posttest (8.9 point gain) than did the regular-calendar pre-K students (7.9 point gain). The 1996-97 test scores for year-round, regular-calendar, and all students are presented in Figures 33 and 34.

Figure 33: PPVT-R Scores for Pre-K Students at Year-Round Schools, Regular-Calendar Schools, and All Schools with a Pre-K Program, 1996-97

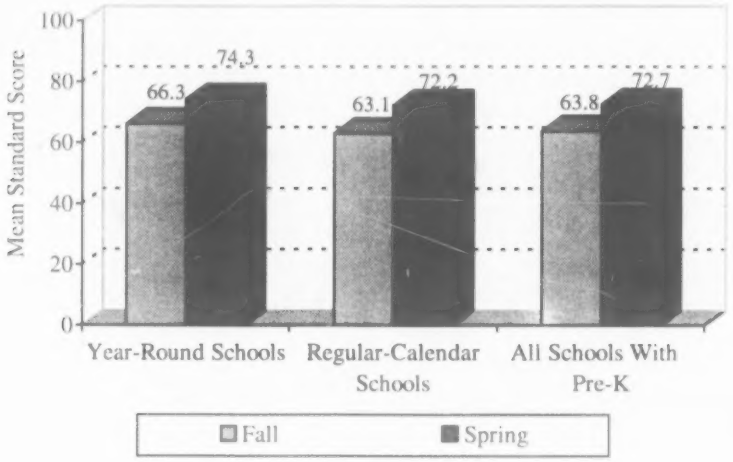
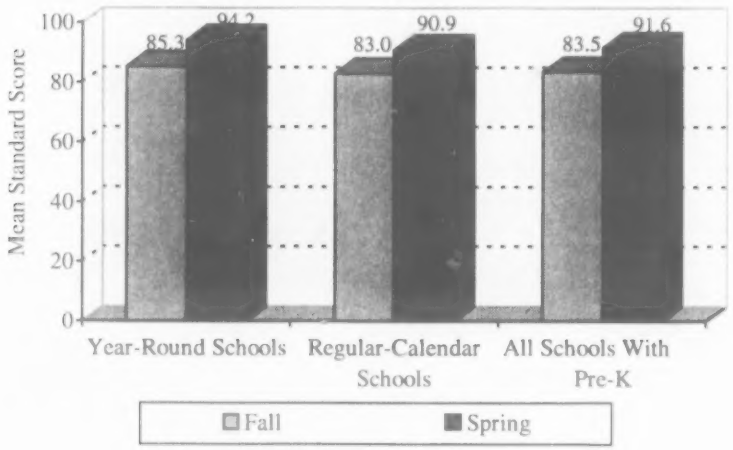


Figure 34: TVIP Scores for Spanish LEP Pre-K Students at Year-Round Schools, Regular-Calendar Schools, and All Schools with a Pre-K Program, 1996-97



In a longitudinal look at test scores for pre-K students, in 1994-95 when six elementary schools joined Sanchez on the year-round calendar, the Title I evaluation staff disaggregated the scores on the PPVT and the TVIP to investigate if achievement was different for year-round students than for regular-calendar pre-K students. After the first year on the year-round calendar for Maplewood, Metz, Ortega, St. Elmo, Widen, and Winn and the third year for Sanchez, the gains for year-round students overall were lower than the gains for regular-calendar students, although the end-of-year score averages were about the same for both groups. This would indicate

that the year-round students started out with slightly higher pretest scores than did the regular-calendar students.

The number of year-round elementary schools with pre-K students reached 11 in 1995-96 when Allan, Barrington, Becker, and Wooldridge implemented the year-round calendar. Three years of longitudinal data are shown in Figures 35 and 36. It should be noted that the data for 1994-95 includes only seven schools, while the 1995-96 and 1996-97 data include all 11 elementary schools involved with the year-round calendar. Figure 35 displays the English scores and Figure 36 displays the Spanish scores for 1994-95 through 1996-97. The gains for the English-speaking students improved slightly in 1995-96 and remained constant in 1996-97. The gains for Spanish-speaking pre-K students who attended year-round schools were the greatest in 1996-97 (8.9 standard score points).

Figure 35: PPVT-R Scores for Pre-K Students at Year-Round Schools, 1994-95 through 1996-97

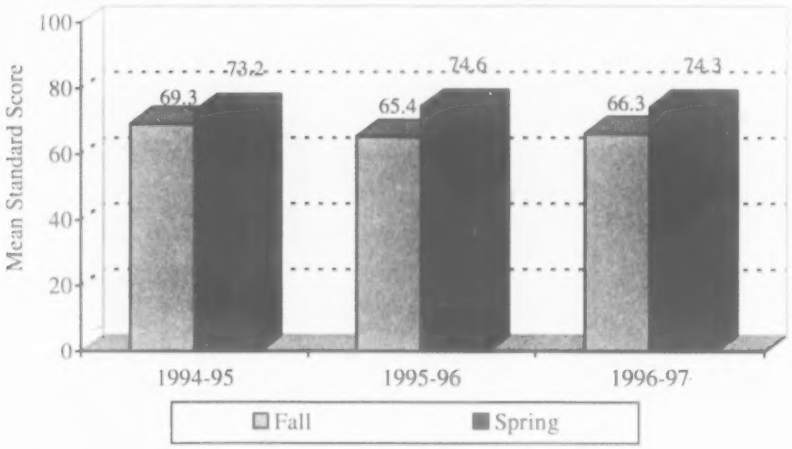
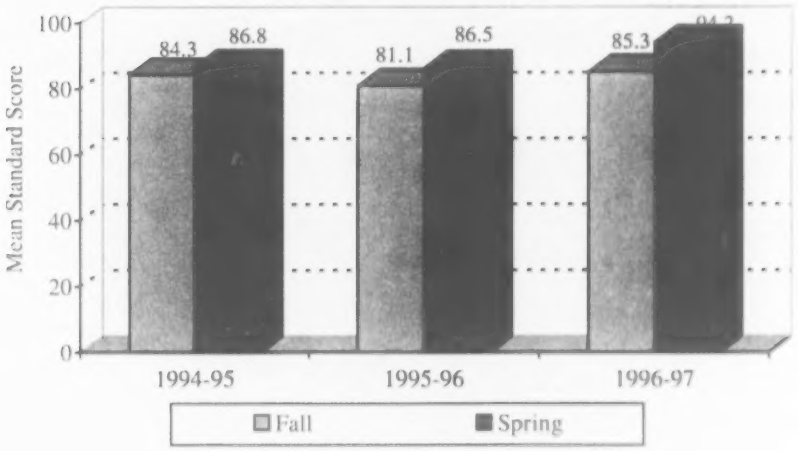


Figure 36: TVIP Scores for Spanish LEP Pre-K Students at Year-Round Schools, 1994-95 through 1996-97



Summary

The year-round pre-K achievement gains on the English language PPVT have been similar to those made by regular-calendar students for the three years of year-round data collection on this measure. However, gains for Spanish-speaking students on the TVIP rose in 1996-97 to 94.2 standard score points, from 86.5 in 1995-96. If this trend in bilingual achievement continues over time, it would indicate that bilingual pre-K students at year-round campuses benefit from the year-round calendar.

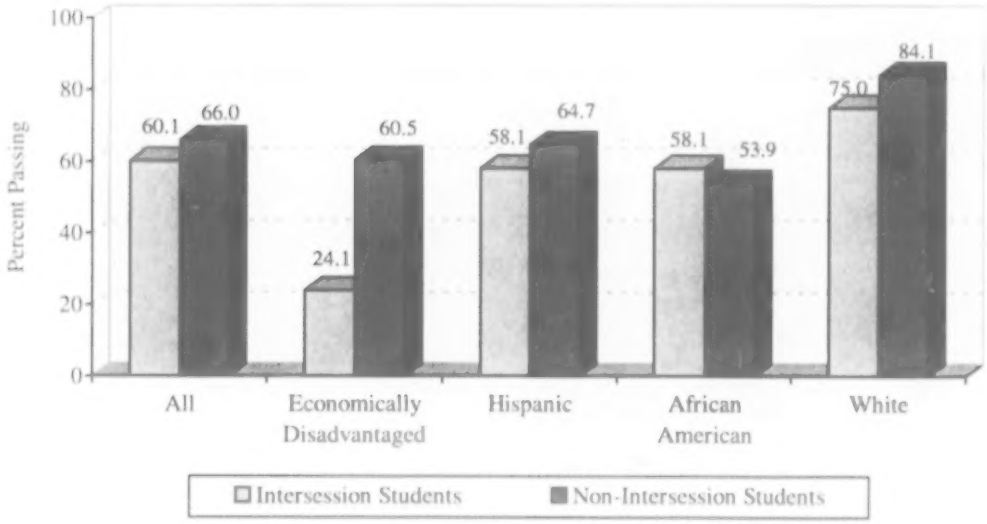
Because research indicates that at-risk and/or bilingual students in the earliest grades benefit the most from the additional instructional opportunities provided by the year-round calendar, this group merits further attention. While the direction in achievement by Spanish-speaking students on the TVIP is encouraging, it does not present a complete picture of the potential benefits of the year-round schedule. The primary advantage of the year-round calendar that was cited by principals and teachers was the fact that students retain more information over the shorter summer break. The district might wish to pursue a study designed to determine if pre-K students in year-round schools retain more information over their summer break than do their counterparts in regular-calendar schools, as evidenced by scores on a standardized test administered at the end of pre-K and at the beginning of first grade.

Intersession and Non-Intersession Students Comparison

One of the benefits of the year-round calendar that is cited most frequently by proponents of this alternative schedule is the additional instructional days available through the intersessions. In order to determine what effects, if any, participation in intersession has on achievement, scores on TAAS were compared for students who attended intersession against scores for students who did not participate. For purposes of this comparison, "non-intersession students" was defined as all other students in the year-round schools, not just those who were invited to attend intersession but did not. Consequently, scores for non-intersession students can be expected to be higher in

general, because the students who are invited to attend intersession activities are, by definition, the students most in need of academic assistance. Figures 37 through Figure 39 present the results of this comparison across all year-round elementary schools.

Figure 37: Intersession Students Compared With Non-Intersession Students in the Year-Round Elementary Schools-Percent Passing 1997 TAAS Reading (All Non-Exempt Students)



In general, students who participated in intersession activities did not perform as well on TAAS as did students who did not participate, with the exception of African American students. The year-round school intersession activities appear to be addressing the needs of this group of students particularly well. Of particular concern, however, is the performance of economically disadvantaged students across all subject areas. When examining these data, it should be kept in mind that it is not possible to determine how this group of students would have performed on TAAS without the benefit of additional instruction through intersession activities. While the figures can be taken as an indicator that the year-round schools are successfully identifying the students most in need of additional assistance, the discrepancy in performance on TAAS between intersession and non-intersession participants nevertheless merits further investigation.

Figure 38: Intersession Students Compared With Non-Intersession Students in the Year-Round Elementary Schools - Percent Passing 1997 TAAS Mathematics (All Non-Exempt Students)

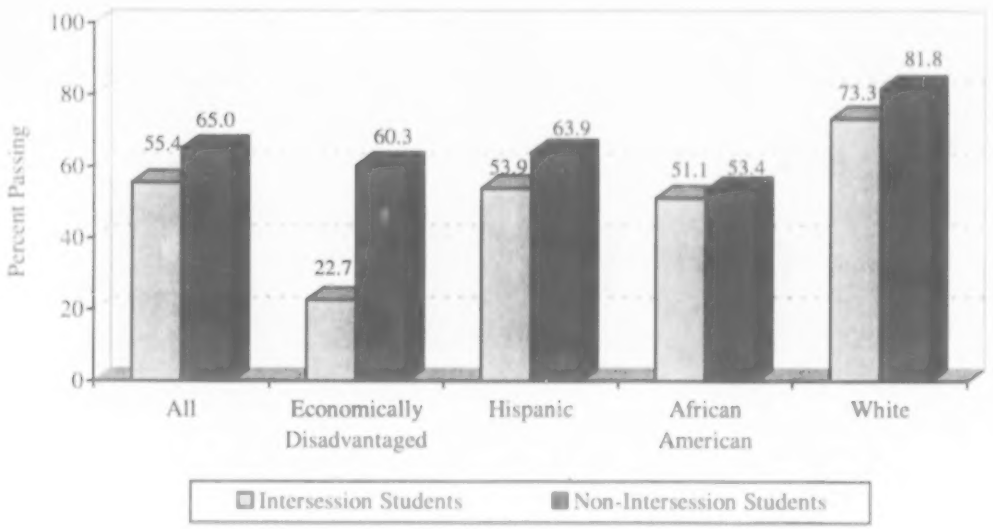
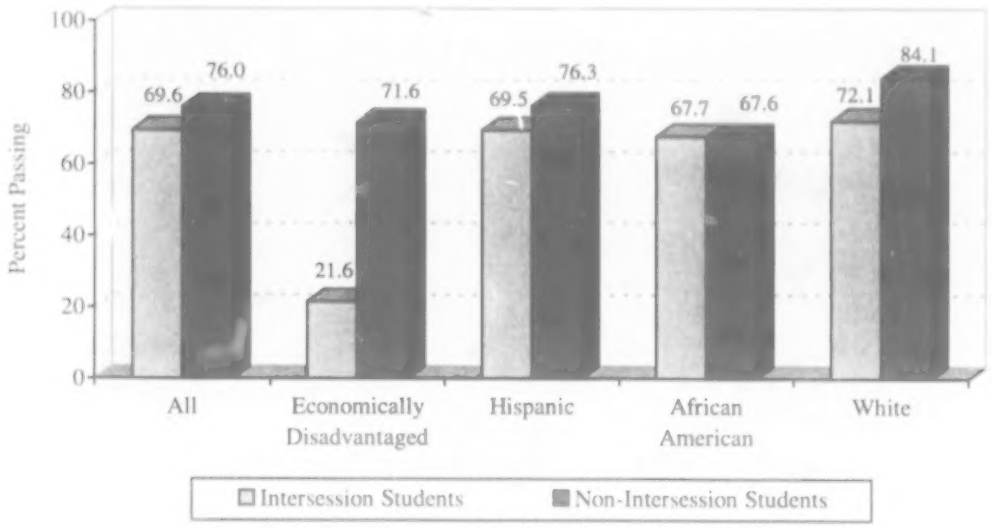


Figure 39: Intersession Students Compared With Non-Intersession Students in the Year-Round Elementary Schools - Percent Passing 1997 TAAS Writing (All Non-Exempt Students)



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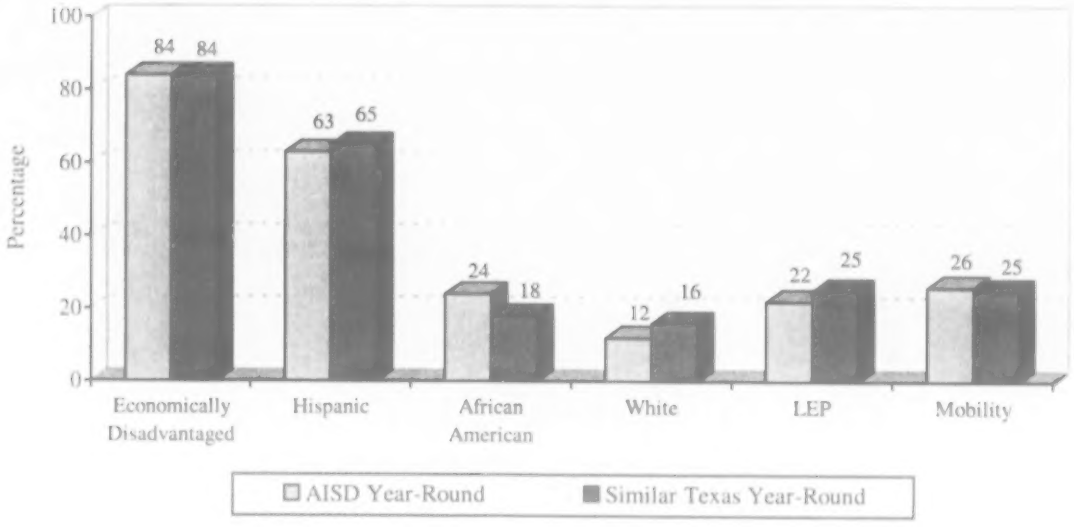
DEMOGRAPHICALLY SIMILAR SCHOOLS COMPARISON

In addition to the internal AISD comparisons on TAAS, the 11 elementary year-round schools were compared to a group of demographically similar schools in Texas. Webb was excluded from this part of the evaluation because the comparison group did not include any middle or junior high schools. The schools that were used for comparison purposes in this study were selected from the 1995-95 Comparable Improvement lists provided to each school by TEA. Campus names on the list from each of AISD's year-round schools were matched against a list of year-round schools in Texas, also provided by TEA. Eighteen schools appeared on both lists (Comparable Improvement and year-round schools), and were used as the group of demographically similar schools for this study. A list of the selected schools is included in Appendix C.

Although it is not known if the schools from other districts in Texas are funded by Title I as are the year-round schools in AISD, it is a safe assumption that most of them are likely to be. In general, schools in the comparison group are located in urban districts and, overall, 84% of the students in these schools are economically disadvantaged. Figure 40 presents demographic characteristics of AISD's year-round schools along with those of the comparison group. It can be seen that the two groups of schools are quite similar on all demographic variables.

Figure 40: Demographic Comparisons of AISD and Similar Texas Year-Round School Group



TAAS Comparison

The TAAS data used for the comparisons are from 1995-96 because more recent data are not available for districts outside of AISD. Figures 41-43 present the passing rates on TAAS reading, mathematics, and writing, respectively. It can be seen that the performance for the two groups of schools is similar across the subject areas. However, in general, African-American and

white students in AISD year-round schools did better on TAAS, while Hispanic and economically disadvantaged students performed better in the comparison-group schools.

One additional comparison is illustrated in Figure 44. The average TLI scores on TAAS reading and mathematics were compared for the 1994-95 and 1995-96 school years for the two groups of schools. While the scores on all tests were similar for the groups, the demographically similar schools showed slightly higher overall TLI gains. Closer examination of the data for the comparison schools revealed that two schools had extremely high gains (at least 11 TLI points) and one of the AISD schools experienced a loss over the two-year period; the averages are affected by these extreme scores, or outliers. In general, it would appear from these data that the year-round schools in AISD are performing on TAAS at approximately the same level as are demographically similar schools throughout Texas.

Figure 41: AISD Year-Round Schools Compared With Demographically Similar Texas Year-Round Elementary Schools – Percent Passing 1996 TAAS Reading

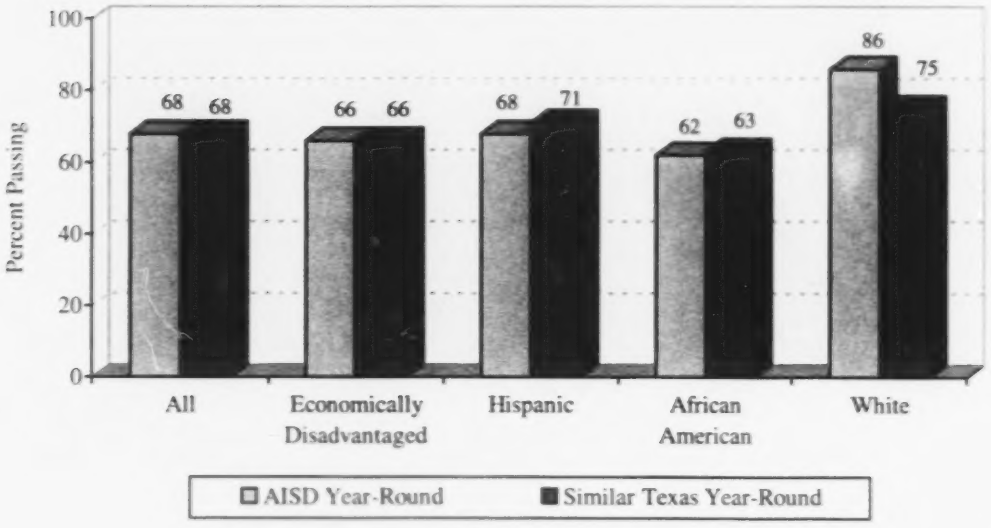


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Figure 42: AISD Year-Round Schools Compared With Demographically Similar Texas Year-Round Elementary Schools – Percent Passing 1996 TAAS Mathematics

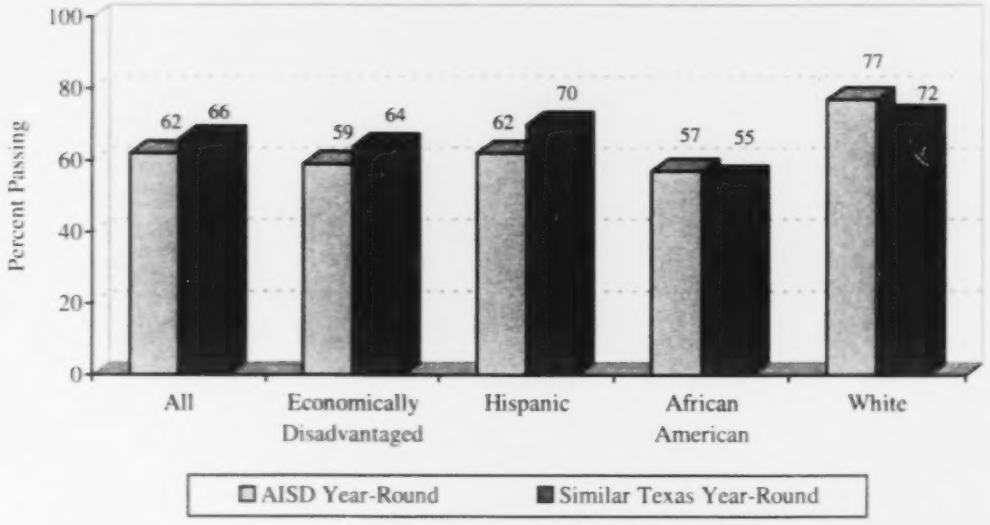

Figure 43: AISD Year-Round Schools Compared With Demographically Similar Texas Year-Round Elementary Schools – Percent Passing 1996 TAAS Writing

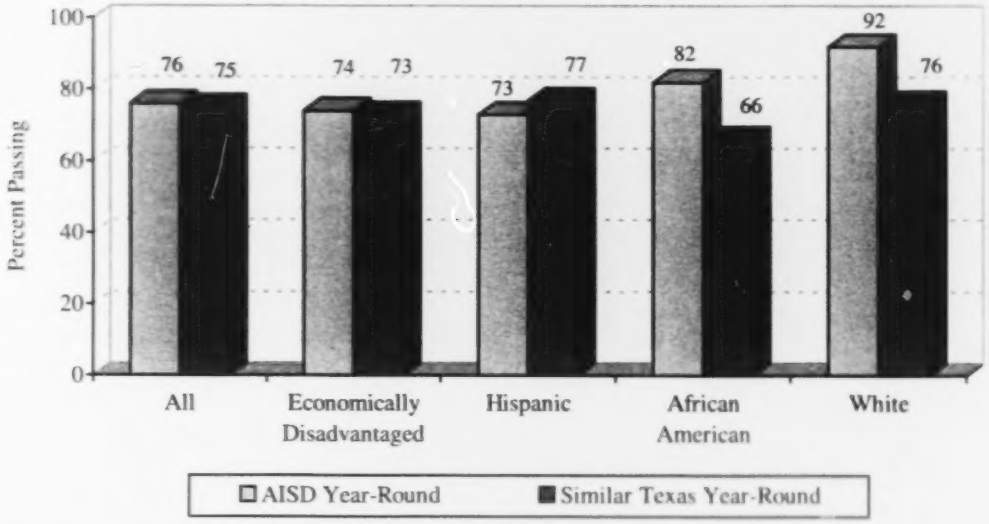

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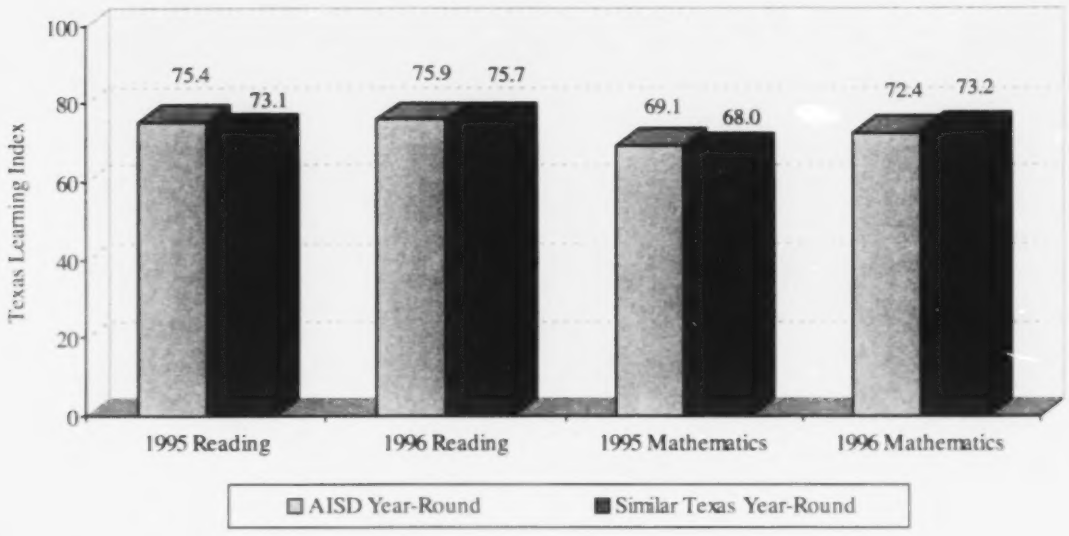
Figure 44: AISD Year-Round Schools Compared With Demographically Similar Texas Year-Round Elementary Schools – Average TLI Scores on 1995 and 1996 TAAS



COMMENDATIONS FOR YEAR-ROUND SCHOOLS

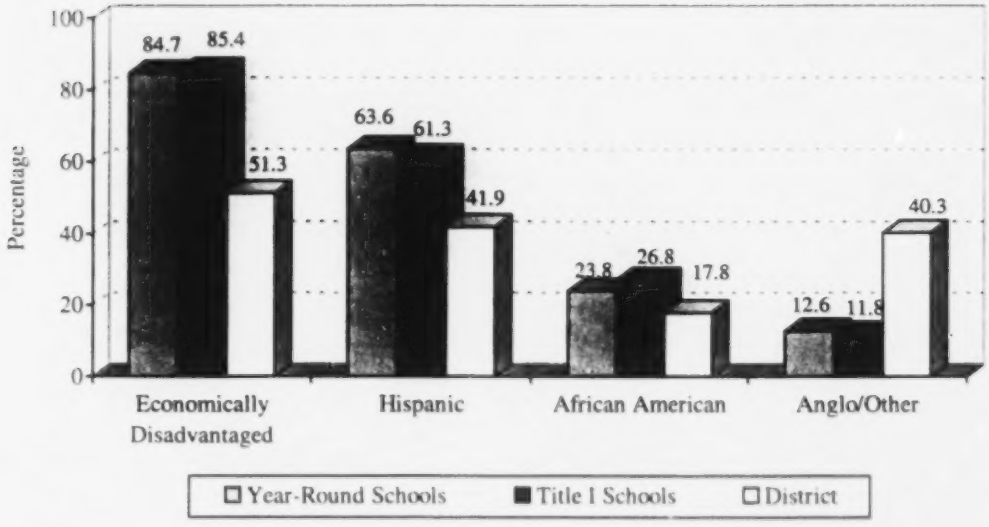
During the 1996-97 school year, a number of the year-round schools in AISD received commendations for the achievement levels of their students. Barrington and Wooldridge were identified by the Texas Education Agency as Commended Schools. This honor is bestowed on schools funded through Title I that have 70% or more of their students passing the reading and math sections of TAAS for the previous academic year (1995-96). In addition to this honor, 10 of the 11 year-round elementary schools were recognized by the AISD Board of Trustees for being among a group of 21 elementary schools in the district that achieved a 7% or greater increase in students passing all portions of the 1995-96 TAAS.

ADDITIONAL ANALYSES

DEMOGRAPHIC COMPARISONS

Demographic variables for year-round students as compared to all Title I schools and to the district as a whole are presented in Figure 45. It can be seen that there are only minor differences between year-round and Title I schools on the demographic variables presented, but that the year-round schools differ from district schools in general. Again, because the year-round schools in AISD are all funded through Title I, this demographic difference is not unexpected.

Figure 45 : Demographics for Year-Round Schools, Title I Schools, and the District, 1996-97



TEACHER AND STUDENT TRANSFER RATES

One concern expressed by several district and school staff members about the year-round calendar is that the number of teacher and student transfers will increase when the alternative schedule is adopted. However, an examination of transfer rates for the past four years (the maximum number of years of transfer data that are available on-line) does not bear out this assumption. Table 7 contains transfer rates for teachers at year-round schools and for AISD schools as a whole, and it can be seen that the rates are virtually identical throughout the timeframe investigated. The adoption of the year-round calendar does not appear to have had any appreciable effect on teacher transfer rates.

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Table 7: Transfer Rate for Teachers at Year-Round Schools and at All AISD Schools

	Year-Round Teacher Transfer Rate*	AISD Teacher Transfer Rate
1993-94	1.10	1.06
1994-95	1.35	1.12
1995-96**	NA	NA
1996-97	1.07	1.13

* Rates for each year are based on differing numbers of schools.
** 1995-96 Teacher Transfer Files are not available.

Tables 8 and 9 contain data related to student transfer rates for elementary and for middle schools, respectively. It would appear that middle school students transfer at a much higher rate than do elementary students, but the figures for both groups have remained constant across the past four years. When transfer rates for elementary schools are examined, the year-round schools have shown a consistently lower rate when compared to district elementary schools. However, the opposite is true for middle schools; students at Webb have transferred at a higher rate over the past four school years when compared to district middle schools. This phenomenon cannot be explained completely by the adoption of the year-round calendar, however, as the pattern appears to have been established prior to Webb becoming a year-round school.

Table 8: Transfer Rate for Students at Year-Round Elementary Schools and at All AISD Elementary Schools

	Year-Round Elementary School Student Transfer Rate	AISD Elementary School Student Transfer Rate
1993-94	7.2	10.1
1994-95	7.2	10.8
1995-96	7.1	10.6
1996-97	7.5	10.9

Table 9: Transfer Rate for Students at Year-Round Middle Schools and at All AISD Middle Schools

	Year-Round Middle School Student Transfer Rate	AISD Middle School Student Transfer Rate
1993-94	20.4	15.4
1994-95	20.5	15.0
1995-96	22.2	14.4
1996-97	17.0	14.6

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STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Another concern about the year-round calendar expressed by some district and school staff members is that student attendance rates will decrease when schools adopt a year-round calendar. Table 10 contains information on average attendance rates at year-round schools as compared to Title I schools and to the district as a whole. Attendance rates for year-round schools have remained fairly constant over the past four years, as they have for the district as a whole. While the average attendance rates at year-round elementary schools are comparable to those for the district, it would appear that the attendance rates at the year-round middle school have consistently been lower than rates for the district middle schools overall.

Table 10: Student Attendance Rates for Year-Round and District Elementary and Middle Schools, 1994-1997

	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Year-Round Elementary	95.2	95.2	94.7	95.1
AISD Elementary	95.4	95.5	95.3	95.6
Year-Round Middle School	90.9	91.7	91.8	91.0
AISD Middle School	93.1	93.4	93.8	94.0

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SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This evaluation of the year-round schools in AISD has provided information on the academic progress of the 12 schools in the district that follow the year-round calendar. A review of the literature concerning year-round education was presented, along with a brief history of the factors that led to AISD's decision to pilot year-round education. This was followed by a discussion of individual school reports, including longitudinal achievement data for each campus. Summaries of the information gained form visits with principals, teachers, and support staff at each of the 12 campuses was presented, along with results from parent and district staff surveys. Finally, achievement, attendance, and mobility data for the year-round schools were compared to data for AISD Title I schools and the district overall.

SURVEYS AND INTERVIEWS

As a result of the evaluation efforts, it was determined that the majority of staff involved with year-round elementary schools is highly in favor of the calendar. Principals, teachers, support staff, and parents expressed favorable views, citing their primary reason as being the beneficial educational effects that year-round education is believed to have on students. The staff at Webb Middle School had more reservations about the calendar, however. Scheduling conflicts frequently arise with districtwide and UIL competitions, and the extracurricular options available to students at Webb are unnecessarily limited because of their involvement with year-round education. Consequently, the request was approved for Webb to return to the traditional nine-month calendar.

The major benefits of the year-round calendar reported by principals, teachers, district staff, and parents include the following:

- Because the year-round calendar allows short breaks throughout the year instead of one long summer break, students are able to retain more information.
- Teachers spend less time reteaching and reviewing material from the previous year at the beginning of the school year when students return after the relatively short summer break.
- Students who need assistance to pass TAAS receive additional instruction during the November and March intersessions.
- Teachers return from the intersession breaks refreshed and revitalized.
- Teachers can use the intersession breaks to adjust their teaching strategies if necessary.
- For parents, childcare costs are spread more evenly throughout the year and, consequently, it is not necessary to arrange for long-term childcare.

There were also disadvantages mentioned by parents, teachers, support staff, and principals. Most of the disadvantages resulted from the inconvenience of having two academic calendars operating in the district at the same time. Some of the specific disadvantages reported included the following:

- Districtwide, regional, area, and state activities often conflict with the year-round calendar.
- The invitation to attend intersessions is not extended to all students.

- Staff development opportunities are limited in the summer for year-round teachers and staff.
- Some parents might have difficulty finding childcare during intersession breaks for students at year-round schools.
- With children on different school calendar, it can be difficult for families to plan vacations and other activities.

In summary, all groups interviewed or surveyed for this evaluation indicated that the potential academic benefits to students is the primary reason for adopting and maintaining the year-round calendar. This benefit is weighed against the inconveniences that accompany the year-round calendar. In particular, scheduling activities to fit both calendars presents a challenge to the district. Also, students may by unable to participate in certain extracurricular activities and statewide competitions because of the year-round calendar.

ACHIEVEMENT AND OTHER DATA

Several analyses were undertaken to address the impact of year-round schools on student achievement. TAAS passing rates, along with average TLI scores, were examined for each of the 12 year-round schools, and a series of comparisons were presented. In addition, a longitudinal analysis of achievement data was conducted for each of the year-round schools. Attendance and mobility data were also examined, along with transfer requests, to see the effects, if any, of the year-round calendar on these variables. The year-round schools in AISD were also compared to demographically similar schools throughout the state to determine how achievement on TAAS compared between these two groups of schools.

The major findings of these analyses included the following:

- Achievement, as measured by scores on TAAS, showed steady improvement for the year-round schools in AISD.
- For the 1996-97 school year, economically disadvantaged, African American and Hispanic students generally achieved higher average TAAS scores in year-round schools than they did in either Title I schools in general or in the district as a whole.
- Intersession students did not make significant gains on TAAS scores when compared to non-intersession participants, with the exception of African American students.
- AISD year-round schools compare favorably with demographically-similar year-round schools throughout the state.
- Teacher and student transfers are not affected by the year-round calendar.
- Student attendance is not affected by the year-round calendar.

RECOMMENDATIONS

As a result of reviewing the evaluation findings, the following recommendations concerning year-round schools are offered for consideration:

- Elementary schools that want to continue with the year-round calendar should be allowed and encouraged to maintain this alternative schedule.
- Elementary schools that would like to become year-round schools and that have the support of teachers and parents should be allowed to proceed with that plan.
- Middle schools in AISD should not follow the year-round calendar because of the scheduling conflicts caused by districtwide and statewide competitions.
- The district should provide more support for the year-round schools by encouraging all administrative departments to be sensitive to the year-round calendar when scheduling activities and setting deadlines.
- District policy should allow parents to transfer their children from a year-round school when the calendar presents a particular hardship for the family.
- The Professional Development Academy should strive to schedule workshops at times when year- round teachers can attend.
- The district should support further research efforts to evaluate the long-term academic benefits of the year-round calendar to students.

In conclusion, the issue of how best to structure the academic year does not have a simple, neat solution. Students have many diverse styles of learning and an equally diverse set of academic needs that must be addressed by schools. Just as teachers use a number of approaches to reach their students, it would seem to follow that a school district also should consider the use of alternative methods to address the multiple needs of its student population. The fact that the district allows for diversity among its campuses in scheduling the academic year is an indication of a dedication to research-based, educationally sound principles that keep the needs of the students at the forefront.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A
SURVEYS AND INTERVIEWS

Year-Round Teacher Survey 112
Support Staff Survey 113
Year-Round Parent Survey (English) 114
Year-Round Parent Survey (Spanish) 115
Year-Round School Principal Survey 116
Year-Round District Staff Survey 117

Year-Round Teacher Survey

Please complete the following survey. Give the completed survey to your grade level representative. A member of the Department of Program Evaluation staff will pick up the survey at the conclusion of our site visit. Thank you for your cooperation.

1. My teaching strategies have changed as a result of teaching at a year-round school.
   a) Strongly agree
   b) Agree
   c) Not Sure
   d) Disagree
   e) Strongly disagree

2. The year-round calendar allows me to take advantage of professional development opportunities (e.g., district- or state-sponsored training, college course work).
   a) Strongly agree
   b) Agree
   c) Not Sure
   d) Disagree
   e) Strongly disagree

3. District programs and activities are coordinated with the year-round calendar.
   a) Strongly agree
   b) Agree
   c) Not Sure
   d) Disagree
   e) Strongly disagree

4. Parents are supportive of intersession activities.
   a) Strongly agree
   b) Agree
   c) Not Sure
   d) Disagree
   e) Strongly disagree

5. Community members are supportive of intersession activities.
   a) Strongly agree
   b) Agree
   c) Not Sure
   d) Disagree
   e) Strongly disagree

6. What percentage of targeted students participate in intersession activities?
   a) More than 90%
   b) 75-90%
   c) 50-74%
   d) Less than 50%

7. What, if any, adaptations to the standard curriculum has your campus made in response to the year-round calendar?

8. What changes or benefits do you perceive as resulting from implementation of the year-round calendar?

Support Staff Survey

1. Were you part of this school's staff when the year-round calendar was first adopted?

2. What changes, if any, to your schedule, work load , or salary have you noticed as a result of the year-round calendar?

3. What are particular concerns/considerations for your job during intersessions and June? (Do you notice any differences in how you do your job during intersessions and June vs. how you do it during the rest of the year?)

4. FOR COUNSELORS ONLY: Has communication/contact with students changed with the adoption of the year-round calendar? If so, how has it changed?

School:_____

Year-Round School Parent Survey

Please circle the response that best represents your feeling about the statements in items 1-6, and provide a short, written response to items 7-9. Please return the completed survey in the enclosed envelope by May 9, 1997. Thank you for your cooperation.

1. My family likes the year-round school calendar.
   a) Strongly agree
   b) Agree
   c) Not Sure
   d) Disagree
   e) Strongly disagree

2. The year-round school calendar has had a positive impact on my child's education.
   a) Strongly agree
   b) Agree
   c) Not Sure
   d) Disagree
   e) Strongly disagree

3. Day care options are readily available for my children during the three week breaks in November, March, and July.
   a) Strongly agree
   b) Agree
   c) Not Sure
   d) Disagree
   e) Strongly disagree

4. Our family schedule (e.g., vacation, activities) has adapted well to the year-round calendar.
   a) Strongly agree
   b) Agree
   c) Not Sure
   d) Disagree
   e) Strongly disagree

5. My child has attended intersession.
   a) Yes
   b) No (If no, skip to question 7)

6. Intersessions have been beneficial to my child's academic progress.
   a) Strongly agree
   b) Agree
   c) Not Sure
   d) Disagree
   e) Strongly disagree

7. What do you like about the year-round school program?

8. What don't you like about the year-round program?

9. List any ways that you are involved at your child's school.

Escuela: _____

Encuesta a los Padres de familia sobre la escuela de todo el año

Favor de encerrar en un círculo la respuesta que mejor represente sus sentimientos sobre las aseveraciones, en los temas 1-6, o de dar una breve respuesta escrita a los temas 7-9. Les rogamos devolvernos la encuesta terminada en el sobre adjunto, para el 9 de mayo de 1997. Gracias por su cooperación.

1. A mi familia le gusta el calendario de escuela de todo el año.
   a) muy de acuerdo
   b) de acuerdo
   c) no estoy seguro(a)
   d) en desacuerdo
   e) muy en desacuerdo

2. El calendario de escuela de todo el año ha tenido un efecto positivo en la educación de mi hijo(a).
   a) muy de acuerdo
   b) de acuerdo
   c) no estoy seguro(a)
   d) en desacuerdo
   e) muy en desacuerdo

3. Las opciones del cuidado de niños durante el día están fácilmente disponibles para mis hijos durante las tres semanas de descanso en noviembre, marzo y julio.
   a) muy de acuerdo
   b) de acuerdo
   c) no estoy seguro(a)
   d) en desacuerdo
   e) muy en desacuerdo

4. Nuestro calendario familiar se ha adaptado bien al calendario de todo el año.
   a) muy de acuerdo
   b) de acuerdo
   c) no estoy seguro(a)
   d) en desacuerdo
   e) muy en desacuerdo

5. Mi hijo(a) ha asistido a la sesión intermedia.
   a) Sí
   b) No (Si responde No, pase a la pregunta 7)

6. Las sesiones intermedias han sido benéficas para el progreso académico de mi hijo(a).
   a) muy de acuerdo
   b) de acuerdo
   c) no estoy seguro(a)
   d) en desacuerdo
   e) muy en desacuerdo

7. ¿Qué le gusta del programa de la escuela de todo el año?

8. ¿Qué es lo que no le gusta del programa de la escuela de todo el año?

9. Haga una lista de las maneras en que Ud. participa activamente en la escuela de su hijo(a).

Year-Round School Principal Survey

1. What are the advantages/benefits of the year-round calendar (for students, parents, teachers, etc.)?

2. What are the disadvantages/inconveniences of the year-round calendar (for students, parents, teachers, etc.)?

3. What are factors that affect the implementation of the year-round calendar at your school (e.g., support from central administration and/or the community, budget issues)?

4. What special arrangements are necessary for operation of your year-round calendar school?

5. How has the year-round calendar affected transfers to and from your school?
   a) by students
   b) by teachers

6. Does the year-round calendar affect the transition of your students as they move to middle school/junior high/high school?

7. Does the year-round calendar affect secondary school/special programs such as sports, band, or gifted and talented?

8. Describe the attitude toward intersessions and the level of participation in intersession activities (for parents, community members, teachers, other district staff, etc.).

9. Is extra funding (other than Title I) necessary to fund the year-round calendar? If so, how are these funds secured?

10. What advice do you have for principals who are considering implementation of the year-round calendar at their campus (e.g., budgeting, pupil selection for intersession,curriculum)?

Year-Round Schools District Staff Survey

Please complete the following survey by selecting the answer that best represents your response to the statements in items 1-7, and provide a short, written response to items 8 and 9

1. There is a standard curriculum used for intersessions at year-round schools.
   a) Strongly agree
   b) Agree
   c) Not Sure
   d) Disagree
   e) Strongly disagree

2. Year-round schools use innovative strategies during intersessions.
   a) Strongly agree
   b) Agree
   c) Not Sure
   d) Disagree
   e) Strongly disagree

3. Teachers at year-round schools have the same opportunities for staff development that are available for teachers at regular-calendar schools.
   a) Strongly agree
   b) Agree
   c) Not Sure
   d) Disagree
   e) Strongly disagree

4. Year-round teachers request transfers to other schools within the district more frequently than do teachers at regular-calendar schools.
   a) Strongly agree
   b) Agree
   c) Not Sure
   d) Disagree
   e) Strongly disagree

5. The special needs (e.g., transportation, custodians, food services, utilities) of year-round schools are adequately supported by the district.
   a) Strongly agree
   b) Agree
   c) Not Sure
   d) Disagree
   e) Strongly disagree

6. How would you characterize parental involvement at year-round schools as compared with regular-calendar schools?
   a) Parents are more involved
   b) Parents are as involved
   c) Parents are less involved

7. How would you characterize community involvement at year-round schools as compared with regular-calendar schools?
   a) Community members are more involved
   b) Community members are as involved
   c) Community members are less involved

8. What are advantages/benefits of the year-round calendar?

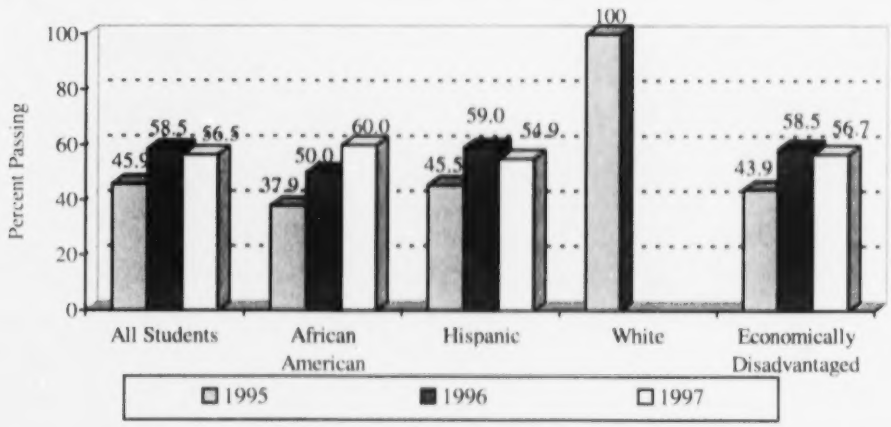
9. What are disadvantages/inconveniences of the year-round calendar?

APPENDIX B

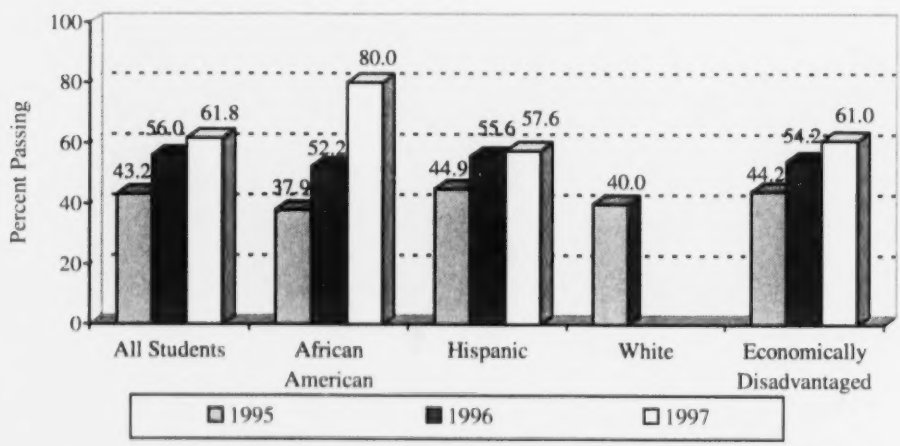
Allan Elementary Percent Passing TAAS by Subject 1995 through 1997 115
Barrington Elementary Percent Passing TAAS by Subject 1995 through 1997 116
Becker Elementary Percent Passing TAAS by Subject 1995 through 1997 117
Maplewood Elementary Percent Passing TAAS by Subject 1995 through 1997 118
Metz Elementary Percent Passing TAAS by Subject 1995 through 1997 119
Ortega Elementary Percent Passing TAAS by Subject 1995 through 1997 120
Sanchez Elementary Percent Passing TAAS by Subject 1995 through 1997 121
St. Elmo Elementary Percent Passing TAAS by Subject 1995 through 1997 122
Widen Elementary Percent Passing TAAS by Subject 1995 through 1997 123
Winn Elementary Percent Passing TAAS by Subject 1995 through 1997 124
Wooldridge Elementary Percent Passing TAAS by Subject 1995 through 1997 125
Webb Middle School Percent Passing TAAS by Subject 1995 through 1997 126

ALLAN ELEMENTARY

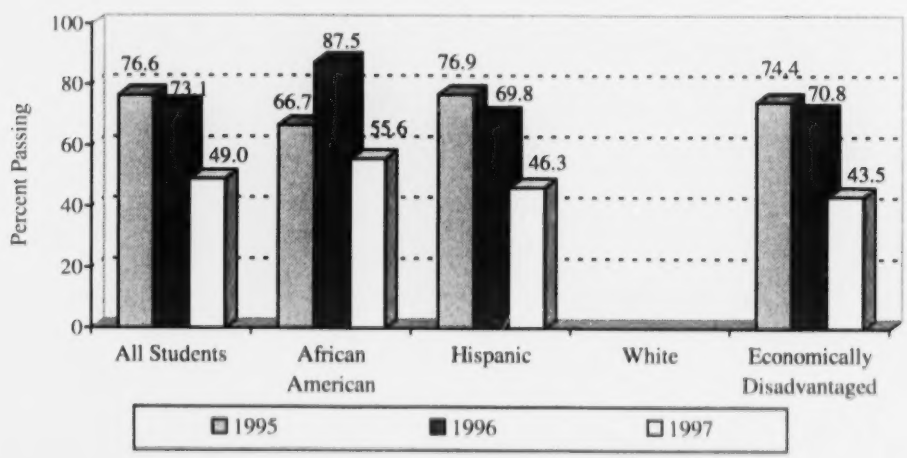
Percent Passing TAAS Reading by Disaggregated Group, 1995 – 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)



Percent Passing TAAS Mathematics by Disaggregated Group, 1995– 997 (All Non-Exempt Students)



Percent Passing TAAS Writing by Disaggregated Group, 1995 – 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)



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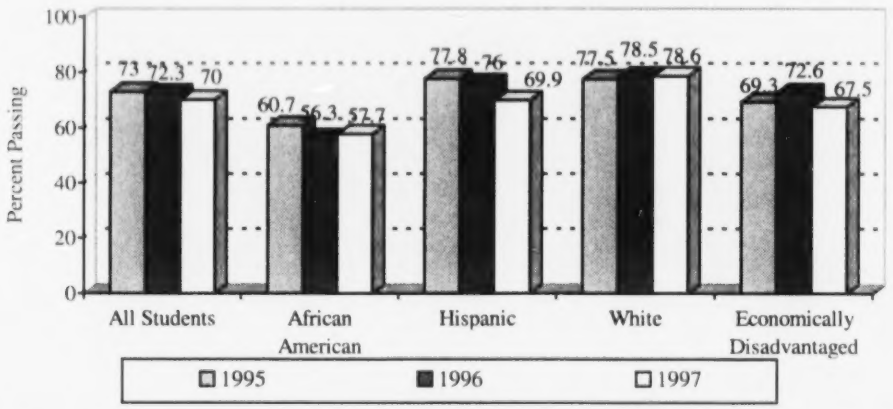
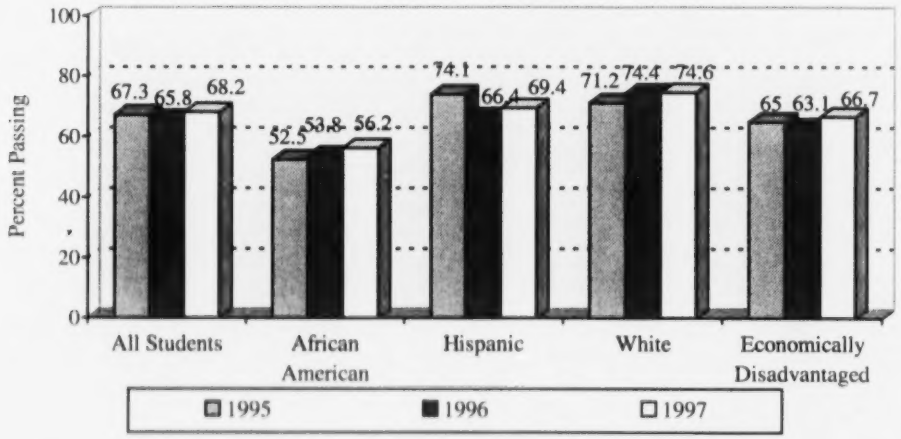
BARRINGTON ELEMENTARY

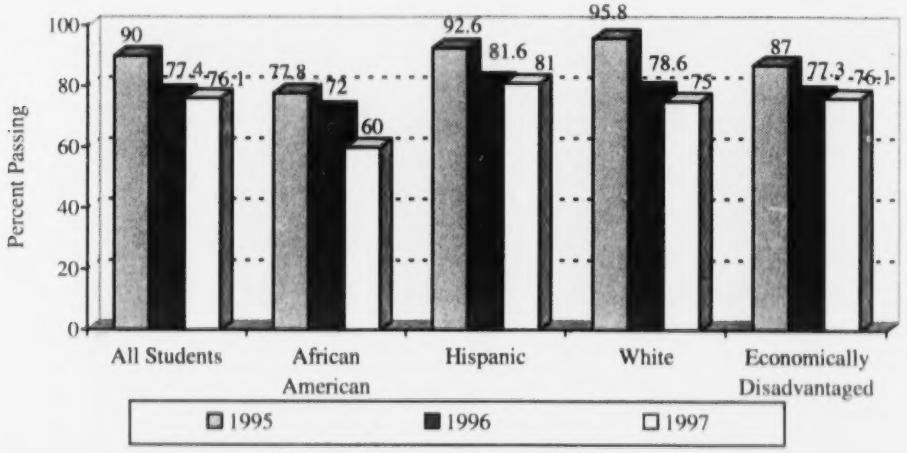
Percent Passing TAAS Reading by Disaggregated Group, 1995 – 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)



Percent Passing TAAS Mathematics by Disaggregated Group, 1995 – 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)



Percent Passing TAAS Writing by Disaggregated Group, 1995 – 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)



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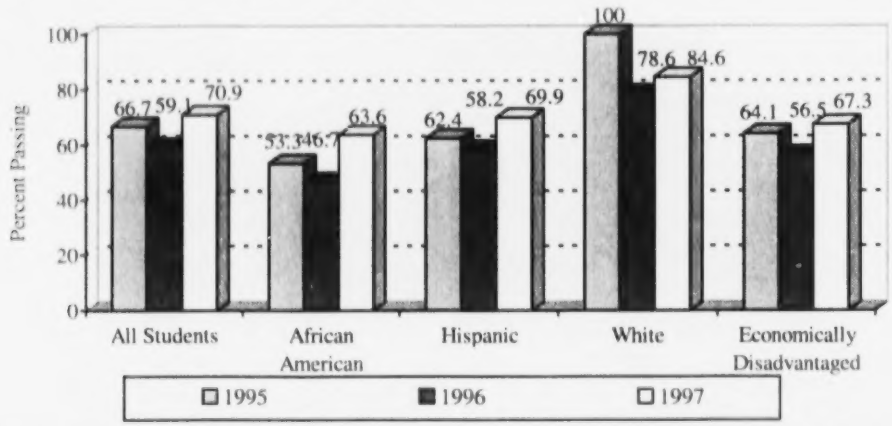
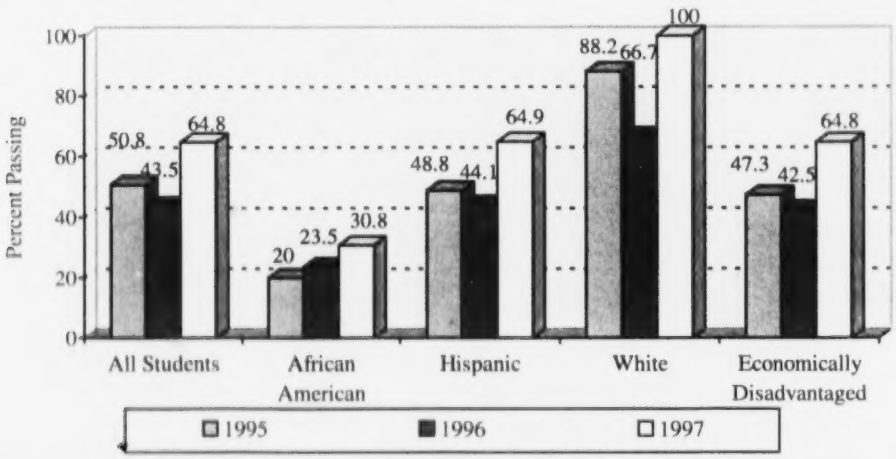
BECKER ELEMENTARY

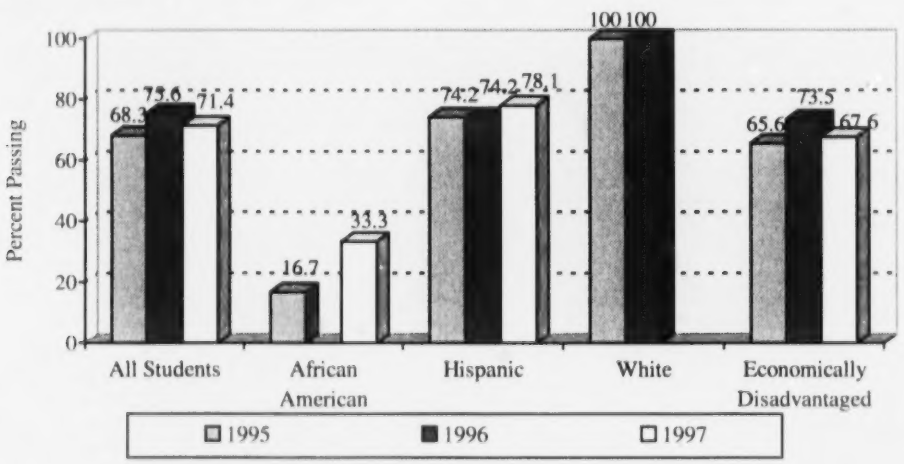
Percent Passing TAAS Reading by Disaggregated Group, 1995 – 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)



Percent Passing TAAS Mathematics by Disaggregated Group, 1995 - 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)

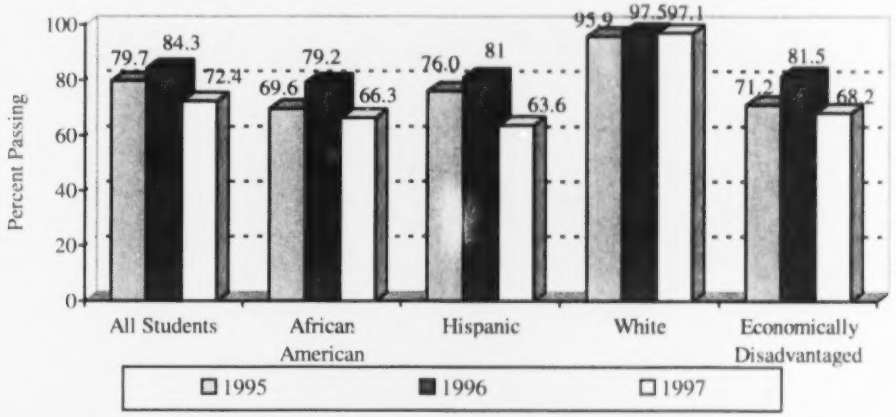


Percent Passing TAAS Writing by Disaggregated Group, 1995 – 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)

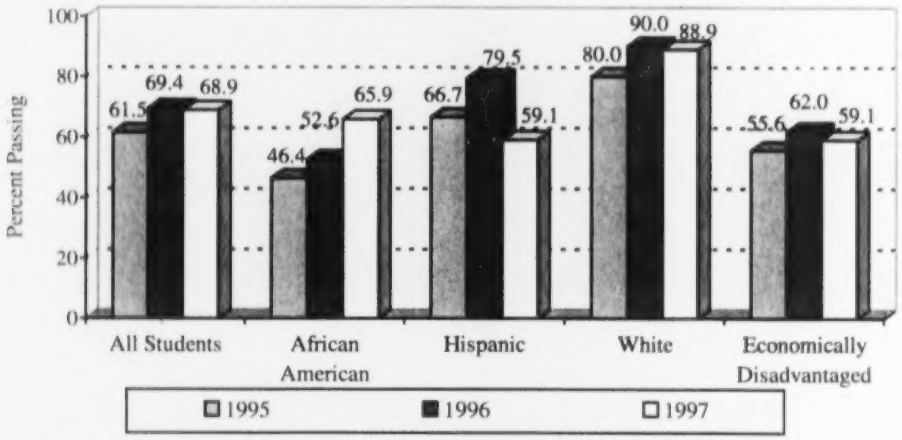


MAPLEWOOD ELEMENTARY

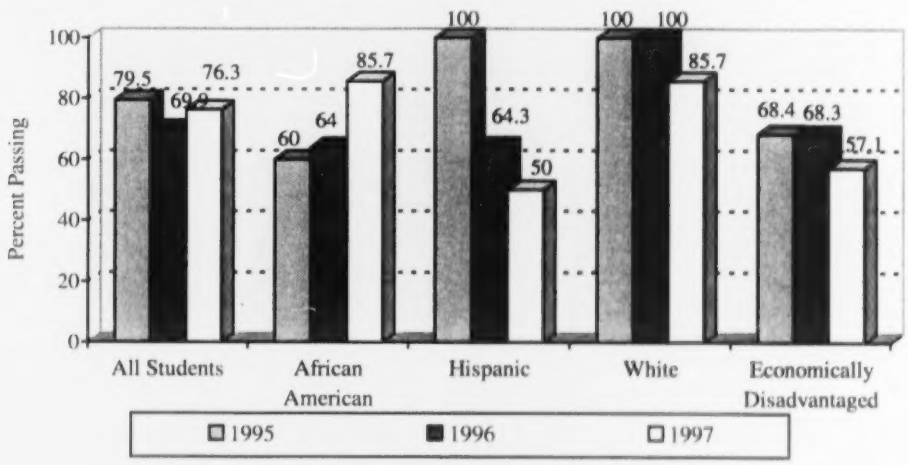
Percent Passing TAAS Reading by Disaggregated Group, 1995 – 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)



Percent Passing TAAS Mathematics by Disaggregated Group, 1995 – 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)

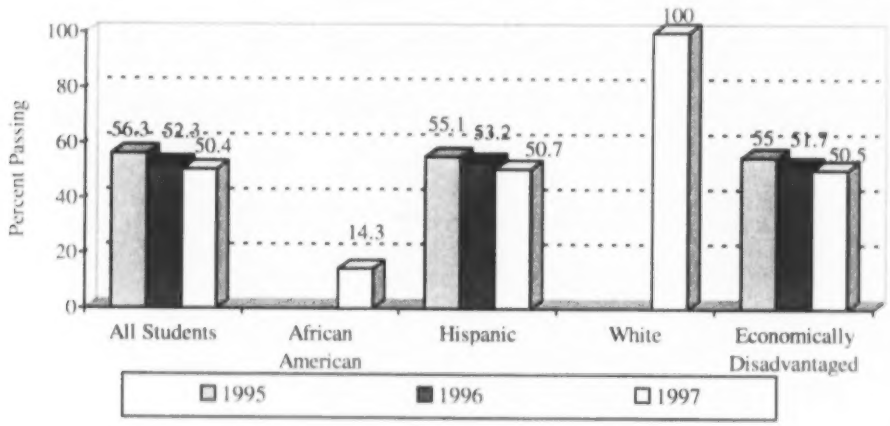


Percent Passing TAAS Writing by Disaggregated Group, 1995 – 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)

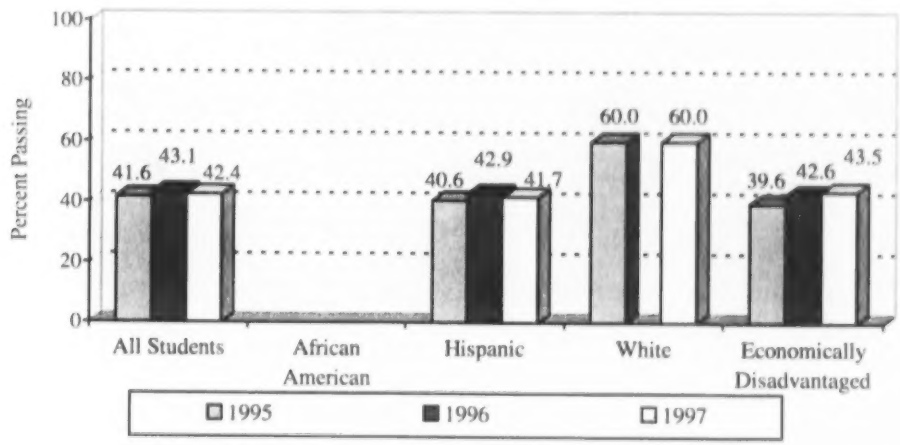


METZ ELEMENTARY

Percent Passing TAAS Reading by Disaggregated Group, 1995 – 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)



Percent Passing TAAS Mathematics by Disaggregated Group, 1995 – 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)



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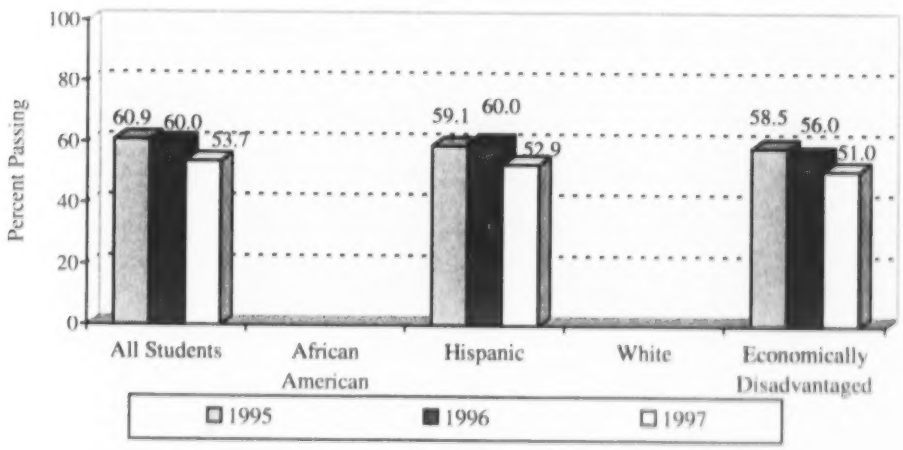
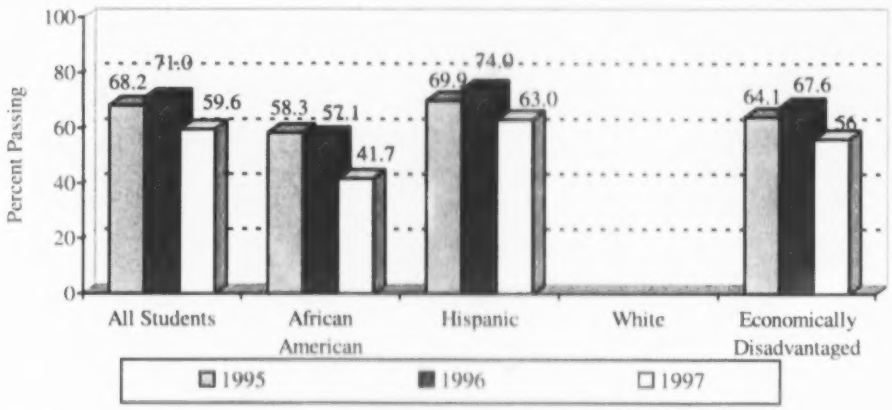


ORTEGA ELEMENTARY

Percent Passing TAAS Reading by Disaggregated Group, 1995 – 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)



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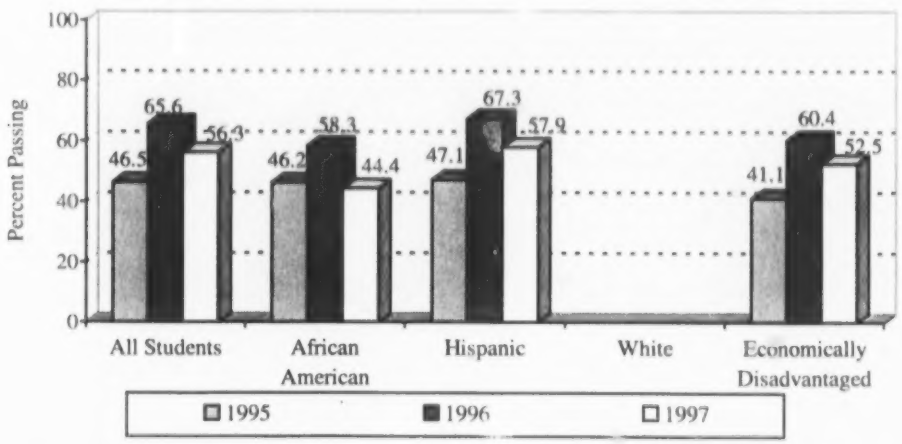

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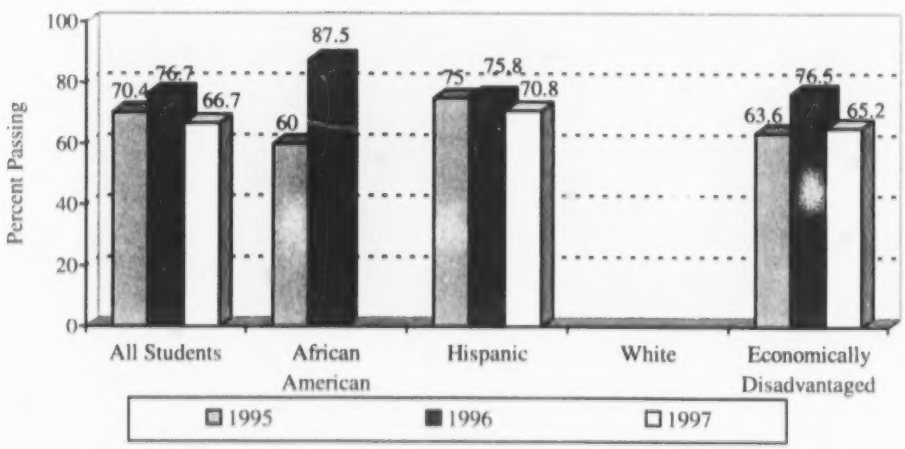

ST. ELMO ELEMENTARY

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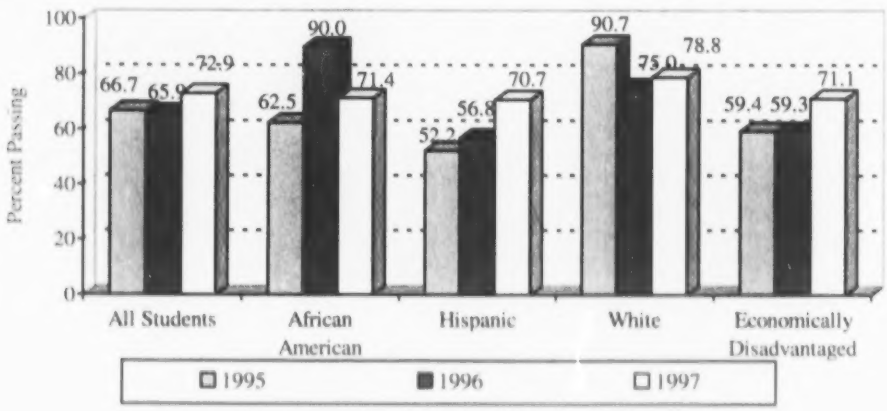

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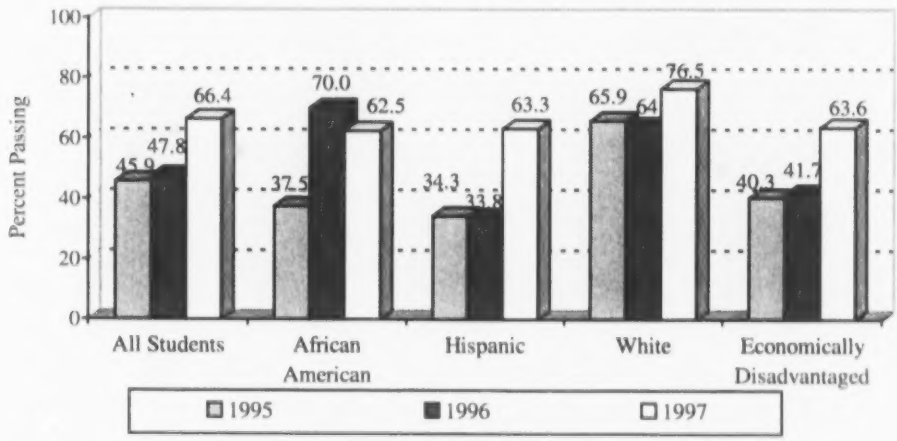

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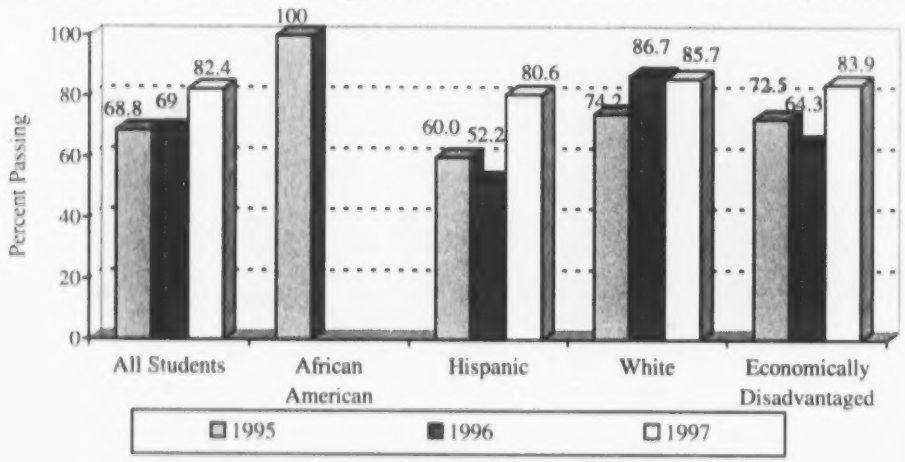
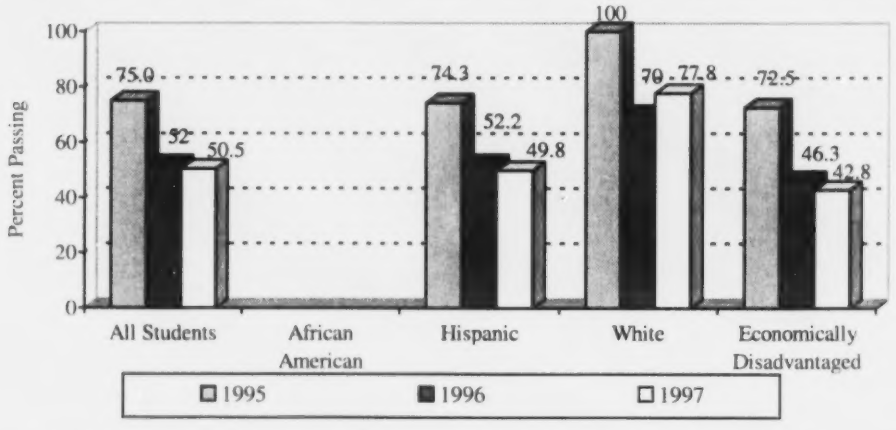
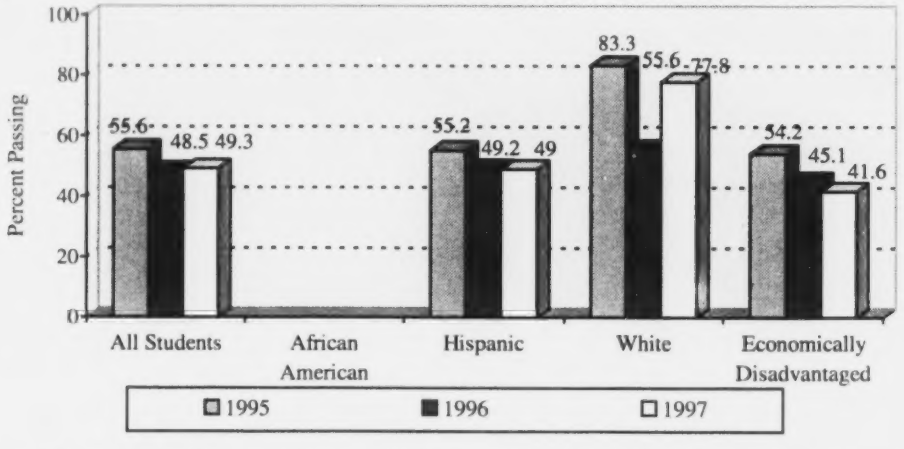


SANCHEZ ELEMENTARY

Percent Passing TAAS Reading by Disaggregated Group, 1995 – 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)



Percent Passing TAAS Mathematics by Disaggregated Group, 1995 – 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)



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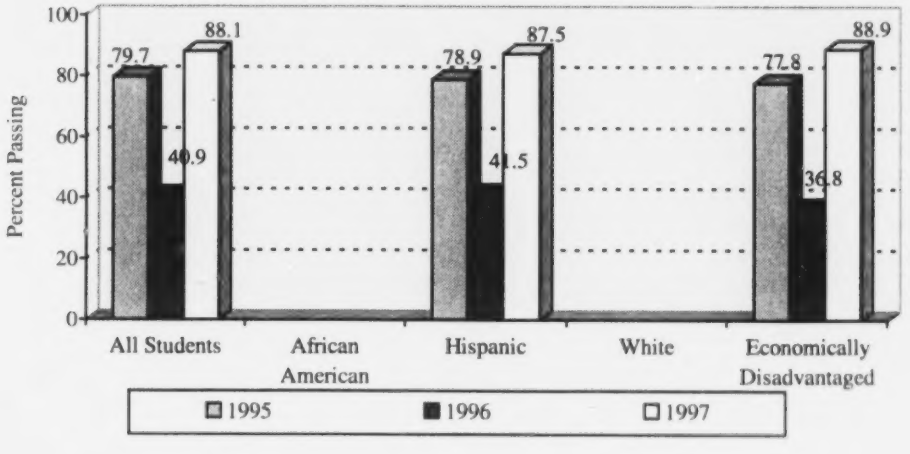

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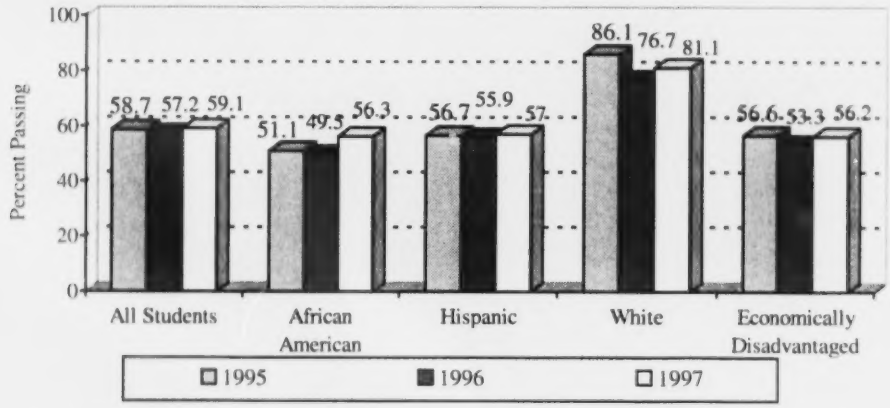
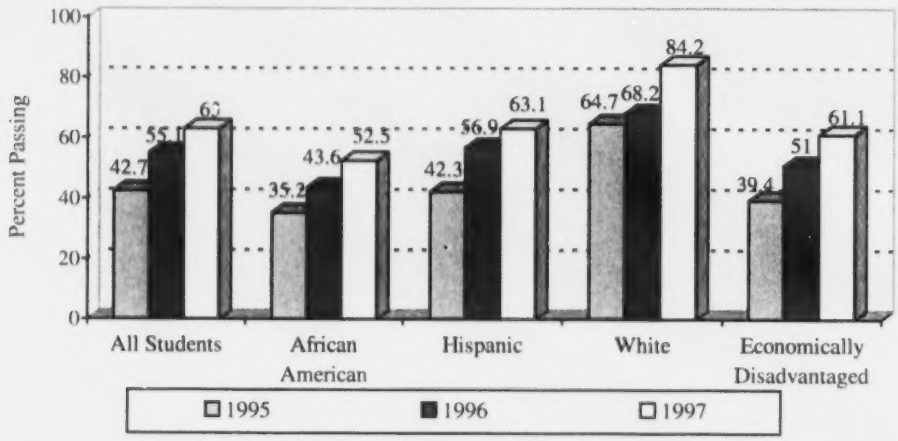
Percent Passing TAAS Reading by Disaggregated Group, 1995 – 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)



Percent Passing TAAS Mathematics by Disaggregated Group, 1995 – 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)



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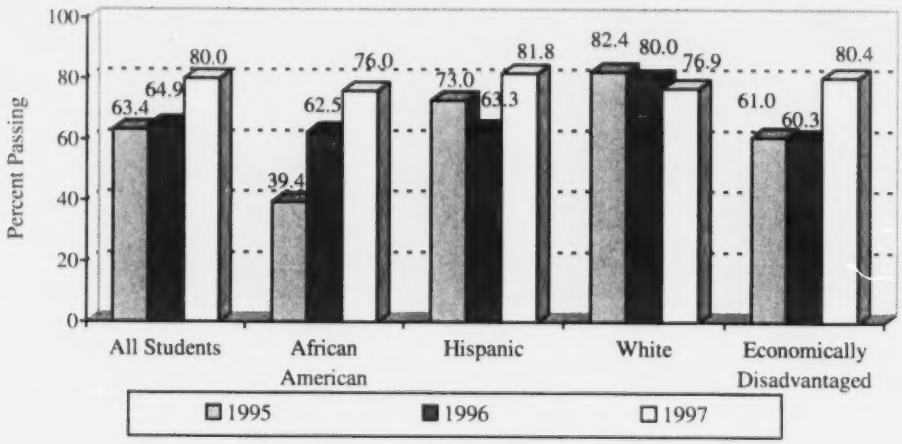

WINN ELEMENTARY

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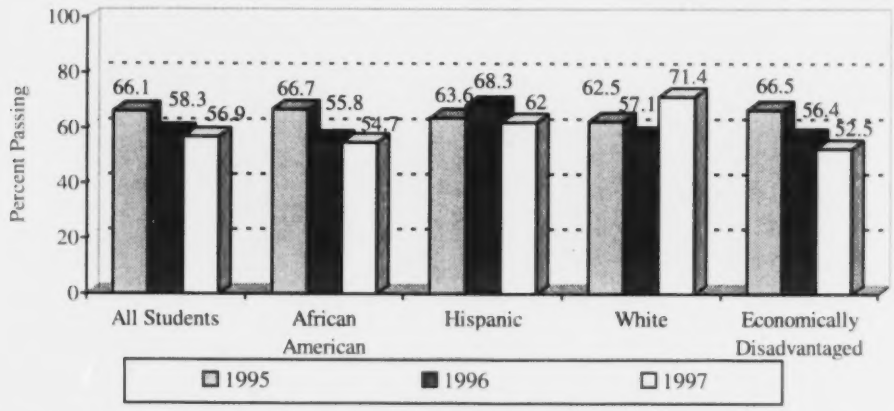
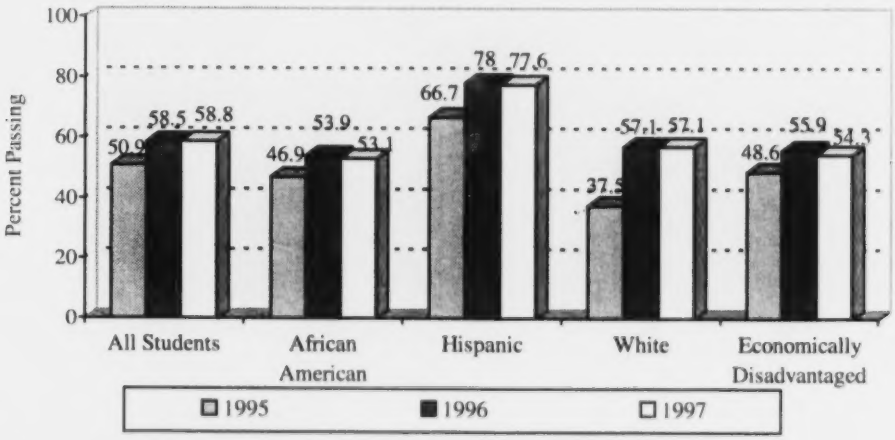
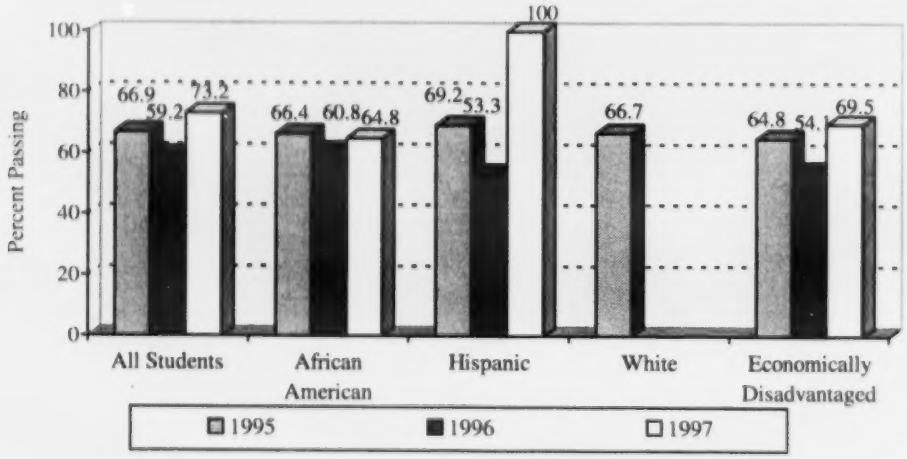


Percent Passing TAAS Mathematics by Disaggregated Group, 1995 – 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)



Percent Passing TAAS Writing by Disaggregated Group, 1995 – 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)



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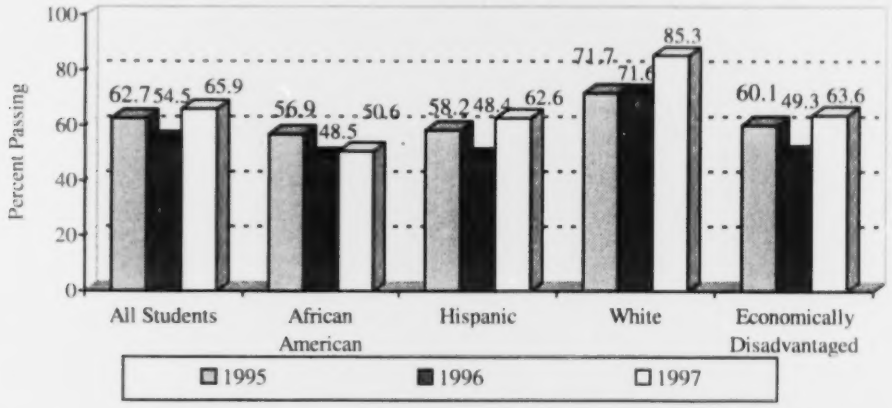
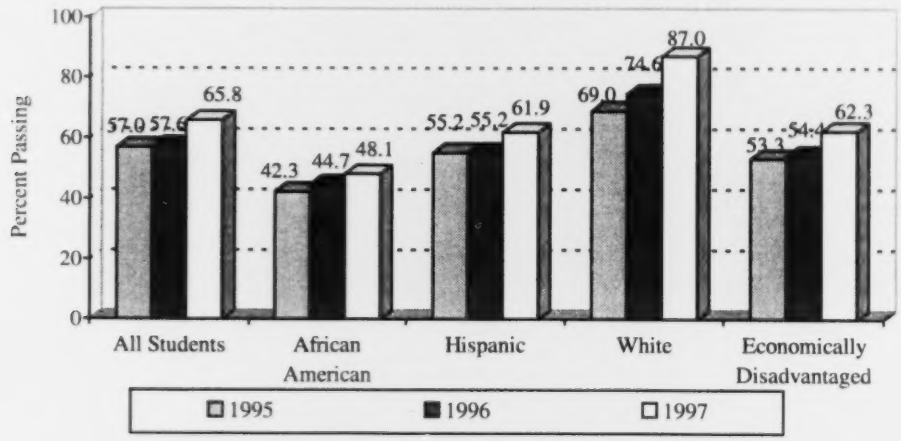
WOOLDRIDGE ELEMENTARY

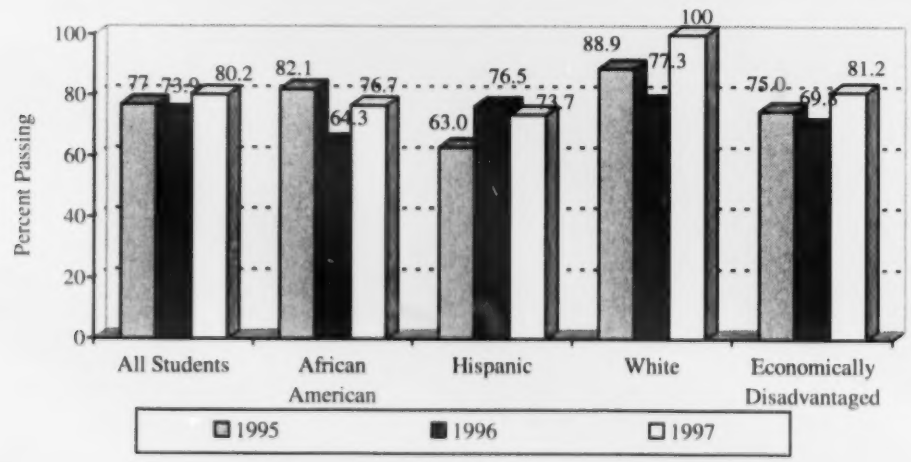
Percent Passing TAAS Reading by Disaggregated Group, 1995 – 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)



Percent Passing TAAS Mathematics by Disaggregated Group, 1995 – 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)

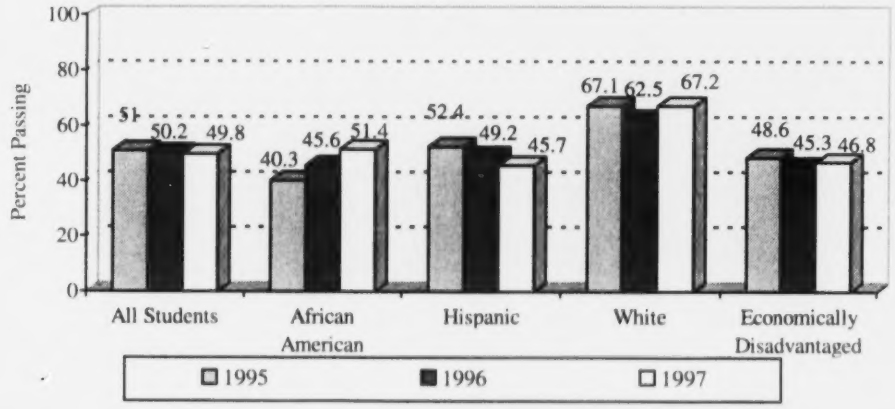


Percent Passing TAAS Writing by Disaggregated Group, 1995 – 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)

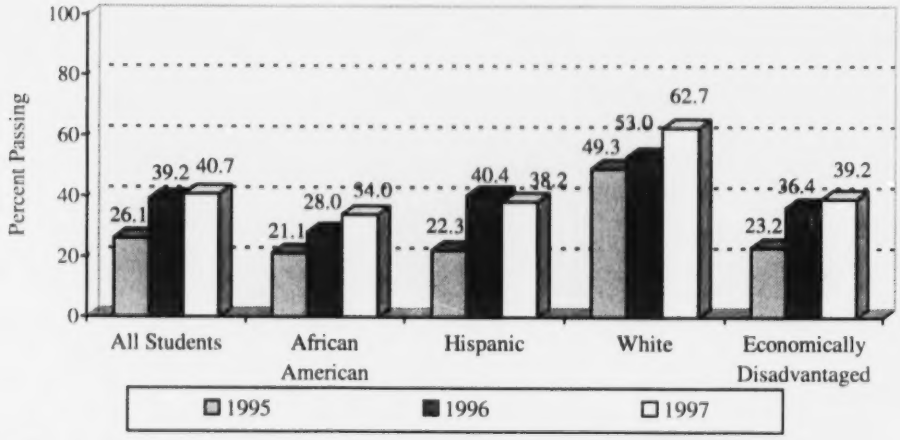


WEBB MIDDLE SCHOOL

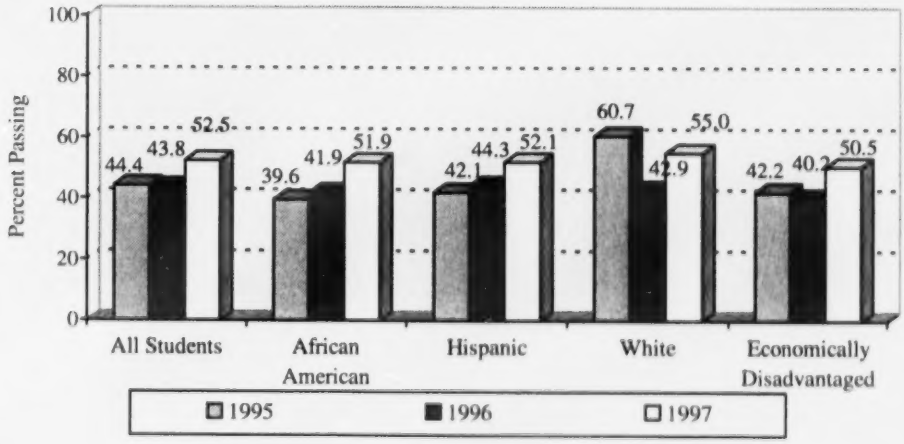
Percent Passing TAAS Reading by Disaggregated Group, 1995 – 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)



Percent Passing TAAS Mathematics by Disaggregated Group, 1995 – 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)



Percent Passing TAAS Writing by Disaggregated Group, 1995 - 1997 (All Non-Exempt Students)



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APPENDIX C

DEMOGRAPHICALLY SIMILAR SCHOOLS

The following schools were used for the comparison with demographically similar schools in Texas.

School	District
J. Q. Adams Elementary	Dallas ISD
Gabe Allen Elementary	Dallas ISD
Desertaire Elementary	Ysleta ISD
John Glenn Elementary	Northside ISD
Glen Park Elementary	Fort Worth ISD
Margaret Henderson Elementary	Dallas ISD
Natha Howell Elementary	Fort Worth ISD
Mary Hull Elementary	Northside ISD
Martin Elementary	Robstown ISD
Robert McDermott Elementary	Northside ISD
Meadow Village Elementary	Northside ISD
Mitchell Boulevard Elementary	Fort Worth ISD
Northside Elementary	Hitchcock ISD
J. B. Passmore Elementary	Northside ISD
Rayburn Elementary	Harlandale ISD
Robert Rojas Elementary	Socorro ISD
John Runyon Elementary	Dallas ISD
W.J. Turner Elementary	Fort Worth ISD
Velasco Elementary	Brazosport ISD
Vestal Elementary	Harlandale ISD

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GLOSSARY

Intersession: The breaks between the 60-day sessions are called intersessions. Supplementary instruction can be offered to students during intersessions.

Multi-track calendar: The student body is divided into several tracks. The instructional and vacation periods of each track are staggered so that at least one track is on vacation at all times. This plan is often utilized in overcrowded schools.

Optional Extended Year: A state-funded program with a primary focus of immediately reducing and ultimately eliminating student retention. School districts may provide up to a maximum of 30 instructional days beyond the number of days authorized under the Texas Education Code by extending the school year, week, or day for students in kindergarten through grade 8 who are identified as likely not to be promoted to the next grade level for the succeeding school year.

School-within-a-school: A year-round calendar and a nine-month calendar are both offered in the same building with a portion of the student body attending each.

Single-track calendar: All students and teachers in the school attend classes and have vacations on the same schedule. It is not meant to save space, but is used primarily to provide a more continuous period of instruction.

60/20 Plan: Students attend school for 60 days and vacation for 20 days. The 60-20 Plan can be varied to take into account holidays and state attendance regulations. It can be conducted in either a single-track or multi-track format. (This is the approximate plan that AISD year-round schools use.)

Texas Assessment of Academic Skills (TAAS): the criterion-referenced assessment program for Texas students, implemented in the fall of 1990.

Texas Learning Index (TLI): a metric for the TAAS established in 1994 at grades 3 through 8 to indicate the performance needed in order to be likely to succeed on the exit level test and to allow comparisons of learning progress between grades.

Track: Organized sequence of days in school and on vacation used in year-round schools.

Year-round education (YRE): An alternative schedule for learning that involves the reorganization of the 180-day school year.

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